



# A NEWSLETTER

from the

## CAPE ANN VERNAL POND TEAM

Winter/Spring 2017

[www.capeannvernalpondteam.org](http://www.capeannvernalpondteam.org)

Email: [cavpt@yahoo.com](mailto:cavpt@yahoo.com)

THE CAVPT IS A NON-PROFIT VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO VERNAL POND CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION SINCE 1990.

## Dez

By Rick Roth

In early August 2016 I got a call from a long time CAVPT member, Sam Bevins. He told me that another long time CAVPT member, Curtis Sarkin, had found an eastern box turtle (EBT), *Terrepenne c. carolina*, in his yard in downtown Rockport, more or less. The EBT is a Species of Special Concern in MA due to decreasing numbers in the state and they are less common in Rockport than many other locales. So....it's kind of a big deal.



Nik Gualco records a GPS location

This one, a male, which we named Dez, is a handsome devil with a 5 3/4" carapace (top of shell) and approximately 35 years old according to my count of his growth rings (which is iffy as some of them are worn off), not shy at all. Wild ones often snap their hinged plastron (bottom of shell) shut and hide out while humans are around. This led us to speculate that Dez may have been an escaped pet...or maybe not. Hard to say for sure.

So I took Dez to my house and set up a makeshift turtle pen with a shallow water dish for drinking and soaking. He's an aggressive feeder and relished earthworms, strawberries and bananas. Then I called Tom French, Director of the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, a Division of MA Fisheries & Wildlife, and he put



Releasing Dez

me in touch with Mike Jones, State Herpetologist. It was determined we should not release the turtle back in Curtis' yard as there are several busy roadways close by and it would not be surprising if Dez met his end under the wheels of someone's moving vehicle. A decision was made to release him in the South Woods

I've lived in this area for 37 years and the only other EBT I know of from Cape Ann was also brought to my attention by Sam Bevins and his family, I'm guessing 7 years ago, from the Folly Cove area.

of Grassroots Wildlife Conservation, [www.grassrootswildlife.org](http://www.grassrootswildlife.org). On August 25th Antioch University grad Nik Gualco showed up



Jess honing in on Dez

at my house and we glued the transmitter to the backside of the turtle's shell with epoxy putty, which is standard procedure. We released Dez that afternoon.

On December 7th I met Jessica Meck, Masters student at Antioch University studying Conservation Biology. She brought a radio receiver and in about 15 minutes we were able to track Dez to a location several hundred yards from where we released him. Jess makes the tracking look easy, which I know from experience, it isn't. Dez had found a small

depression in the forest floor about 6-8" deep and managed to cover himself with leaf litter. I can't remember the exact air temperature that day, but it was freaking cold and well below freezing. Dez was notably lethargic.

EBTs in northern climates actually freeze solid for 3-4 months in winter. Only a few vertebrates worldwide are able to pull this off, including the wood frog, *Rana sylvatica*, which is common on Cape Ann.

We hope to find Dez again in the spring, and if his transmitter battery holds a charge we may get a chance to track him for a while longer.....

.....to be continued.

## We know what you're thinking....



Dez in his overwinter burrow

What's an article about an EBT doing in a Vernal Pond Team newsletter. CAVPT has a track record of working with native reptiles and amphibians that are in harms way or in need of a home until they can be released. Because of our experience CAVPT is uniquely qualified with these animals and familiar with state regulations. So...even though EBT turtles are not known for their use of vernal pool habitat we took this opportunity to help out a native reptile.

All Photos - credit Rick Roth



# 2016 Benefit Concert and Silent Auction

with Charlie Farren and Satch Kerans

**CHARLIE FARREN**  
with **Satch Kerans**

**An All Acoustic Show by**

**Benefit Concert & Silent Auction**

**Friday, September 9, 2016 • 7-11:30 pm**

Located at Cape Ann's Marina Resort, 75 Essex Ave., Gloucester

Buy tickets for \$10 online at [www.kingart.com/cape-26](http://www.kingart.com/cape-26), or at The Get Outside Center, 186 Main St., Gloucester, and Toad Hall Bookstore, 27 Main St., Rockport. Tickets \$15 at the door. Cash bar.

For more info go to: [www.capeannvernalpond.org](http://www.capeannvernalpond.org)

**Sponsors:**

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- NEW ENGLAND HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY
- PERIWINKLES RESTAURANT
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- WOODMANS OF ESSEX
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- SEAPORT GRILLE
- ROCKPORT HOUSE OF PIZZA
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- TOODELOOS
- MILE MARKER ONE
- CHRIS WOOD
- DESTINO'S SUB SHOP
- TOMI-LOU
- KEITH BERTONE
- GLEN TOWNE

Great music, cool critters and wild auction action!



Handmade ceramic plate by Littleton Rick Roth. The salamander and fern looked so realistic you think you could pick them off the plate, but... they're ceramic too



Porcupine enjoys a fruity snack



## Special Thanks to Our Generous Concert Sponsors

TD Bank  
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Institution for Savings  
Cape Ann Savings Bank  
Bluewater Graphic Design  
Bertone General Contracting  
Mile Marker Restaurant & Bar  
New England Herpetological Society  
Joe Seta, Charlie Farren & Satch Kearns



## Keep an Eye Out for Our Next Great Fundraiser!

Details when we get them at the Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team:

Website - [capeannvernalpondteam.org](http://capeannvernalpondteam.org)  
Facebook - Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team  
Twitter - @CapeAnnVernalPT  
Instagram - CAVPT

## Some of Our Other Events in 2016



A calling spring peeper and spotted salamander on one of our nighttime field trips.



Look how small emergent wood frogs are! They jump out of the pools in early July.

From the way back machine - some of the action at our wicked scary pumpkin carving event, circa 2009



We were in the education tent at the Cape Ann Farmers Market last August with a bunch of our snakes. Cape Ann Art Haven was in charge of the kids activity - painting wooden snakes. Some kids used our live snakes as models.

# Fundraising

## Amazon Smile

In this day and age of virtual technologies, donating to your favorite charity is easier than ever. Most of us frequently make purchases through Amazon. It's fast, convenient, and can be done pretty much anywhere at any time with your smart-phone. Thanks to Amazon Smile, when making your online purchases you can choose a favorite charity and Amazon will donate a percentage of your total to them at no cost to you.

Please support what we do and consider selecting the Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team as your charity of choice.



## The Life Changing Magic of....a Yard Sale

Our yard sale is a tremendous fundraiser for us! Fundraising is an ongoing project, but an event such as this brings in money that isn't earmarked for specific uses as are most grants. This money can go directly to overhead expenses such as rent, insurance and animal care.

So...start getting ready for the big event...clean the closets, garages, storage units and sheds and set aside everything for us! Drop your stuff off at St. Peter's parking lot (Rogers St., Gloucester) on Saturday May 27 between 7:00 and 9:00am. The rain date is June 3, same time...same place. When it gets closer check your emails and Facebook for the latest info.

We are joined in this event by our sister organization Kestrel Educational Adventures. Your donation benefits two great non-profit conservation groups on Cape Ann.

Oh...and by the way, this is a wonderful opportunity to volunteer! An hour or two gives a break to someone who started the day early.

Please no TVs, Computers, Mattresses or Junk.

Thanks again to Mac Bell for donating the great location!

## Your Boots are Made for Walking, so..

Get your Pride Stride pledge sheet from the website - [www.gloucesterpridestride.com](http://www.gloucesterpridestride.com) and walk for CAVPT on Sunday April 30. This is another great way to raise money for us. So, round up your family and friends and walk for us. In past years we have had a wonderful live animal exhibit and we'll be there again this year weather permitting.

## Grants & Donations

### In 2016 We Received Grants From:

- New England BioLabs Corporate Donations, \$2,000
- Barnes Group, \$1,000

Thanks to everyone who responded to our annual appeal with generous donations, and to those who donated throughout the year.

### Special thanks to,

- William Taylor
- Anne Rosenfeld
- US Charitable Gift Trust

We are proud, and oh so grateful, to have over fifty volunteers generously donating their time and energy to make CAVPT grow and flourish.

## Maritime Gloucester

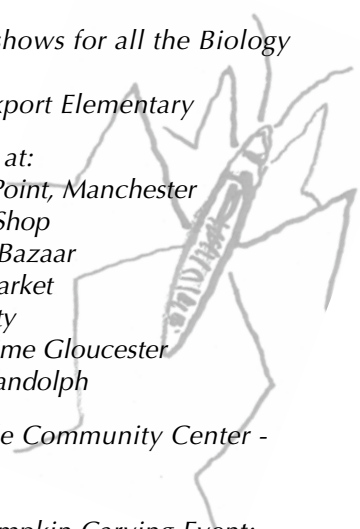
Maritime Gloucester is happy to support vernal ponds and their crepuscular activities through use of our bulk-mailing permit. This summer we invite you to visit our newly renovated, locally-stocked aquarium, relax with our beautiful harbor views, learn a little something in one of our fun and informative programs, and more. Open Memorial Day through October at 23 Harbor Loop, Gloucester. [www.maritimegloucester.org](http://www.maritimegloucester.org)



## Last Year We...

- Led our usual nighttime vernal pond field trips
- Certified another 8 vernal ponds
- Presented "Intro to Vernal Ponds" at:  
Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary
- Vernal Pond field trip & Certification Workshop  
Agassiz Rock, The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR), Manchester  
New England Herpetological Society at the New England Wildlife Center, Weymouth
- Vernal Pond Critters for Lynn TV
- Presented Vernal Pond/Snake Exhibits at:  
Perley School, Georgetown  
Pride Stride  
Cape Ann Trail Stewards, Transit to Trails  
CAVPT Benefit concert
- Presented "Snakes of New England and the World" at:  
Westboro Land Trust, 2 shows  
Harold Parker State Forest, Andover  
Earthfest at Lynn Woods  
Crane Estate, TTOR, Ipswich  
Great Meadow National Wildlife Refuge in Sudbury for Riverfest  
Cape Ann Discovery Center (TTOR)  
Breakheart Reservation, Stoneham  
Maudslay State Park, Newburyport  
Camp Spindrift, YMCA  
Hamilton-Wenham Public Library  
Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary  
Manchester Memorial School for Manchester  
Parks & Recreation  
Gloucester High, 3 shows for all the Biology students  
Summer Fun at Rockport Elementary
- Presented Snake Exhibits at:  
Girl Scouts at Tucks Point, Manchester  
Animal Crackers Pet Shop  
Gloucester Sidewalk Bazaar  
Cape Ann Farmers Market  
Gloucester Block Party  
Heritage Days, Maritime Gloucester  
Mass Reptile Expo, Randolph
- Dogtown Days, Lanesville Community Center - Dogtown critters
- Hosted Wicked Scary Pumpkin Carving Event:  
The Get Outside Center, Gloucester

Strider drawing by Ollie Balf



The CAVPT newsletter committee is powered by



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332 Main St., Gloucester  
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## Certification Report

2016 was another productive year for vernal pond certification. We got some support from Herb Stillman who showed us a few new pools in Gloucester. We also did the field work for pools in Beverly and Rockport.

CAVPT board members Dave McKinnon and Erik Hinderlie help work through the backlog of collected vernal pool reports and register them online with the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP), Vernal Pool and Rare Species (VPRS) Information System. We are always looking for new volunteers interested in participating in the certification process. Whether it is scouting pools, collecting data, or online certification there is something for everyone. Or if you know of any vernal pools please get in touch with us. For volunteer opportunities please visit our website at [capeannvernalpondteam.org](http://capeannvernalpondteam.org) To notify us about a vernal pool email - [cavpt@yahoo.com](mailto:cavpt@yahoo.com)

## Turtle Trapping

We continued our efforts this year hoping to find the elusive Blanding's Turtle here on Cape Ann by trapping the large beaver pond on the Tomson Reservation, near an historical siting. We did find several snapping and painted turtles, but no Blanding's. It's a large wetland so we may check it again this year as there could be Blanding's in there that we haven't found. We will continue to search for rare species habitats.



Photo credit - Rick Roth

Look who we found in one of our traps masquerading as a Blanding's turtle. One big, crinkly, snapper seen here with Nick Taormina.

## A Note from Our Executive Director Rick Roth

***Our vision for the future is to open a Wildlife Center on Cape Ann. This will not be restricted to vernal ponds - all kinds of New England habitat will be represented. The Center will also include the following:***

- Live indoor and outdoor animal exhibits, professionally constructed with consideration for viewing experience, comfort, and the welfare of the animals. For example, in an otter enclosure one will view the animals underwater, on the water, in an upland habitat setting, and in a den
- On-site veterinarians
- Native wildlife rehabilitation
- Captive breeding and head-starting of rare species
- Native plants in greenhouses and outdoors
- Starting point for field trips to various habitats
- Destination for school, church, and camp field trips
- Educational programs on-site, with hosted speakers and trained wildlife instructors
- Gathering place to mobilize the local community and visitors to become stewards of our wild populations
- Home-base for our presentations and live animal exhibits at community events, schools, state parks, libraries, and private venues
- Green facility with solar panels, composting toilets, and powered by renewable resources




## Rainy Nights and Flashlights

Every spring CAVPT members lead nighttime field trips to the ponds to see the amphibian-breeding activity. Check your flashlights, get new batteries, and put your rain gear on the hook by the door. To avoid habitat destruction and critter disturbance, we limit the number of participants on each trip. We also ask that you leave your dog at home. Interested? Email us at [cavpt@yahoo.com](mailto:cavpt@yahoo.com).

***Don't miss any of our exciting upcoming events!***

Check out our website at:

**[www.capeannvernalpondteam.org](http://www.capeannvernalpondteam.org)**

Like Us on  Facebook Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team  
Follow us on  Instagram CAVPT  
Follow us on  Twitter @CapeAnnVernalPT



Nick checks a turtle trap and puts in fresh bait

# If we value wildlife, we must protect vernal ponds.....

## What a CAVPT membership offers:

- A really neat CAVPT car decal
- CAVPT t-shirts and hats
- Subscription to our annual newsletter
- Email updates of vernal pond activities and events
- Guided field trips to local vernal ponds
- The satisfaction of knowing you are helping preserve these unique and vital habitats

## Our programs & activities include:

- Vernal pond certification
- Exhibits & presentations
- Daytime & nighttime field trips
- Certification workshops
- Posters
- "Vernal Ponds" video
- Website: [capeannvernalpondteam.org](http://capeannvernalpondteam.org)
- Scout patch program
- Snakes of New England & the World

Salamander linoleum cut by Isabel Natti



Anna Diperna shows a wood frog egg mass to some interested young vernal pond field trippers.

## The funding for our programs is provided by:

- Corporate gifts
- Grants
- Sale of our merchandise
- Donations from community members like you
- Memberships

CAVPT thanks the following organizations and foundations for their generous support over the years:

The EnTrust Fund • The Norcross Wildlife Foundation • GoodSearch  
New England Herpetological Society • Sweetwater Trust • TD Bank  
Toad Hall Bookstore • Gloucester Cultural Council • Sam Park & Company  
New England BioLabs • The Bellevue Fund • The William P. Wharton Trust  
New England Grassroots Environment Fund • Cell Signaling Technology  
Barnes Group

## Support the Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team. Become a member or renew today!

### Membership levels

- ☐ **Family - \$35.00 (USD)**  
Subscription period: 1 year  
Yearly membership to CAVPT for a family (2 adults and children)  
Gift includes a CAVPT decal & bumper sticker  
\*Please list names of adults and names/ages of children
- ☐ **Family - Lifetime - \$350.00 (USD)**  
Subscription period: Unlimited  
Lifetime membership to CAVPT for a family (2 adults and children).  
Gifts include CAVPT decal & bumper sticker, Vernal Pond Field Guide,  
Shirts or hats  
\*Please list names of adults and names/ages of children
- ☐ **Individual - \$20.00 (USD)**  
Subscription period: 1 year  
Yearly membership to CAVPT for an adult (17 years and older)  
Gift includes a CAVPT decal & bumper sticker.
- ☐ **Individual - Lifetime - \$200.00 (USD)**  
Subscription period: Unlimited  
Lifetime membership to CAVPT for an adult (17 years and older).  
Gifts include CAVPT decal & bumper sticker, Vernal Pool Field Guide,  
Shirt or hat
- ☐ **Junior (under 16) - \$10.00 (USD)**  
Subscription period: 1 year  
Yearly membership to CAVPT for juniors (16 years and younger)  
Gift includes a CAVPT decal & bumper sticker

Go to our website: [www.capeannvernalpondteam.org](http://www.capeannvernalpondteam.org)  
for membership gift details

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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(address required if paying by credit card)

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Send me email updates about field trips and events

☐ Yes! I'd like to be a volunteer

☐ Additional donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Check enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Payable to: Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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Please detach this form and mail with your donation to:

Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team  
The Get Outside Center  
186 Main St., Gloucester, MA 01930



CAVPT is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your contribution is tax deductible



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Block print by Isabel Natti

## ***The Need for Protection...***

The temporary nature of vernal ponds often belies their importance. Countless plants and animals live in vernal ponds. Insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals visit to drink, feed, breed and nest. Some species, such as spotted salamanders, wood frogs and fairy shrimp are totally dependent on this habitat.



Photo by Chris Wood

## ***How to Protect...***

The best way to protect vernal ponds is to own the property. The next best way to protect them is to certify ponds with the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program. Certification applications are now done online and include photographs and field observation data. To learn more go to [www.capeannvernalpondteam.org](http://www.capeannvernalpondteam.org) or check out the Vernal Pool Association's website at [www.vernalpool.org](http://www.vernalpool.org)



Monarch print by Isabel Natti

Come see us this spring! CAVPT leads nighttime field trips to witness the annual migration and breeding of wood frogs and spotted salamanders...see inside, or our website, for more details.

