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[Test] This Week at Giants Neck Beach

1 message

Giants Neck Beach Association <website.gnba@16054043.mailchimpapp.com>

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This Week at Giants Neck Beach

September 2, 2024

[Upcoming Meetings/Events](#)

There will be a meeting of the BOG on September 4 at 6:30 p.m. [Agenda](#).

[News](#)

If you haven't already, please take a moment to complete the survey about the geese at GNB. Only one response per email address is allowed. [Click here for the survey](#).

[Giants Neck Beach - A Natural Beauty!](#)



(photos courtesy of Justine Bettera)

Hippocampus erectus

A few of our neighbors have seen our native seahorse out in the water at Mother's

Beach in the past couple of weeks. When we had a native tank in our house, we would go to the beach every few days to look for interesting creatures. We would occasionally pull the seine net to shore and find this treasure. The picture attached is one of the seahorses we found.

The Northern seahorse (*Hippocampus erectus*) is found in Cape Cod and the Gulf of Mexico. Living in the seaweed, it likes to hold on using its prehensile tail. It can grow to 5 inches and has about 50 rectangular bony plates, which give it a semi-rigid skeleton. The males have a kangaroo-like pouch (an incubation pocket) on its ventral side used for reproduction. Spawning happens during every season. During courtship, the female sprays 250 to 650 eggs into the male's pocket. The brood develops for about 20-21 days and remains in the pouch until it swims well. When they are ready, the father holds onto a plant stem, and rocking back and forth, he allows the pouch to open, and then a seahorse will pop out. He continues jerking back and forth until the bag of the newborn seahorses is empty, which is about $\frac{5}{8}$ of an inch in length. Within 8-10 months, they have gained their full 5 inches!

If any of the seahorse babies die before birth, gas is formed, and the male seahorse fills up with air and floats to the surface, where some hungry fish enjoy him as a meal. The average lifespan of a seahorse in captivity is 4.7 years. Seahorses rely on living food and use their elongated noses as a straw sucking in small crustaceans. They feed for 10 hours daily and consume up to 3600 brine shrimp.

Cornell University is working to restore the beds of Eel Grass at *Zostera marina*, which has declined over the last century, to ensure we have a habitat where our Northern Seahorse can continue to live. Most of the habitat loss of eelgrass is due to "coastal degradation, poor water quality, and other mostly human-related factors." (<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/fall2009.pdf>) One day, we may not be so fortunate as to see this fish on our beach unless we continue to take good care of our ecosystem.

Resources include:

https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Hippocampus_erectus/

<https://ccesuffolk.org/marine/seahorses>

Get out and enjoy our beautiful, natural Giants Neck Beach. And remember to be kind to nature and everyone you meet!

~LD



Thank You

★ FOR YOUR ★

Hardwork!

— H A P P Y L A B O R D A Y —

www.giantsneckbeach.org

visit us on the web

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Our mailing address is:

P.O. Box 226 Niantic, Connecticut 06357-0026

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