

WACHAPREAGUE Times

News, information
& happenings from
the sweetest little
town in the US.

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Marine Life Day Is Really Fun!

MARINE LIFE DAY comes once a year at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, but the work that it represents happens year-round.

Rebecca Turner Smith, hatchery manager and research specialist at VIMS, says that the event's purpose is "to showcase all of our research to the public."

The work takes place in the laboratory, or on boats or elsewhere in the field. You might have seen groups of VIMS students walking along Atlantic Avenue, exploring the marsh, viewing and capturing creatures to study and chart.

Marine Life Day shows off all of this work, and lets us more land-bound people understand our marsh and waterways better. "Seeing kids see these species for the first time" is a huge part of the Day, Smith says.

A HIGHLIGHT of this year's Marine Life Day is the work VIMS has been doing with bay scallops. The Institute has received

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This & That

THE TOWN WILL SOON have three new Automated External Defibrillators, which could conceivably save your life. The project was initiated by Beth and Arthur Mendez, and was helped by a grant from the county.

One AED will be placed near the marina, one near the fire station and one in Powell Park.

THE WACHAPREAGUE INN's Day-Trippers cruises are available for birding trips now, during the peak migration time.

Contact the Inn, or check their website - wachapreagueinn.com/daytrippers to find out more, or make a reservation. And check out the locally made items in the hotel's gift shop.

Capt. Meriwether Payne's birding tours, announced in the Eastern Shore Post last week,

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Dredging to Start Soon

THE PROJECT TO DREDGE from Burtons Bay to Finney Creek is set to start this week or next, says a worker who did not want to be identified.

A number of inspections required for the project have contributed to the long lead time, he said. The project is being done under the auspices of the Army Corps of Engineers, by Next Generation Logistics of New Orleans.

The Army Corps has to inspect all the equipment, all the safety gear and all the paperwork, the source said.

Michael Anderson, project manager for the Army Corps in Norfolk says that "safety is first and foremost," and that it does take time.

"We are not going to trade execution for safety," he said.

A part of the process that has already been time-consuming and which, one expects, will continue to be time-consuming, is the putting together of the lengths of pipe that have been stacked on the commercial dock. Each pipe has to be fused to the next one, the man said, and this is a slow process. This time, in addition, the pipeline is being more clearly marked. During the last dredging process, a number of boats hit the pipeline.

Harbormaster and Town Council member Sandie Pulchaski says that the plan is to dredge the channels to a depth of 8 feet at mean low water. She expects that it will take a couple months to complete the project.

The initial estimate was to remove 50,000 cubic yards of dredged material, the source said, but that estimate was based on a "long-ago survey."

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Marine Life

funding to bring scallop and sea grass work closer to Wachapreague, Smith says. A big restoration project dealing with scallops and sea grass out in Burton's Bay started last year, and will go for a few more years. Smith says the Eastern Shore Lab scallop crew and the VIMS seagrass team will be at Marine Life Day, as will researchers from the main campus with sonar cameras associated with this work. The cameras allow researchers to document the fish using the local waterways as the seagrass restoration progresses in Burtons Bay, and might shed light on shifts in fish populations as new habitat is established.

Smith says VIMS "recently had its first bay scallop recovery in Burton's Bay, which is really exciting. Bay scallops have not been in our area for years and years," she says.

Also, she says, VIMS hopes to have some sharks and rays to show off during the Marine Life Day event. The ESL staff "does heavy collection trips" in the weeks preceding the event - and can't ever be sure what it will and won't collect.

They can count on collecting things that don't

move much, like oysters, conchs and plants, and on the more regular species of fish and crustaceans in our area. But you can't always find a shark or a skate when you need one.

"The pressure's on!" she says, and recalls one year, Sean Fate, the watercraft operations manager (and Wachapreague Volunteer Fire Department chief), coming in at 9 a.m. and saving the day with a "huge ray" he'd collected the morning of the event.

The group collects specimens with trawls and small dredges, and recovers some species from gear that workers have already deployed.

In addition to the bigger species that will be there live and in person, there will be a variety of creatures and marine plants and algae to look at through microscopes.

"From plankton to mud crabs, along with rays and sharks, we will have it," Smith says.

THE EVENT TAKES PLACE on Saturday, Sept. 21, from noon to 4 p.m. at the Seawater Lab, 39 Atlantic Ave. Look for more information on the VIMS website, vims.edu/ ESL. Marine Life Day is free and open to all.

Dredging

The reality is that the group will pull out about 70,000 cubic yards of material.

The dredged material will be channeled to a site south of Wachapreague, designated by the Virginia Marine Commission.

The dredging ship, complete with the gigantic anchors that lie on each side of the boat, weighs 90,000 pounds, a worker said during the lifting

process. The anchors are the heaviest part of the ship, weighing more than 40,000 pounds each.

The anchors are deployed on each side of the ship, and keep it stable and in place while it essentially vacuums up debris and sediment from the channels.

The cost of the federally funded project is \$2,340,000, Anderson said.

This & That

are full up. She hopes you will take a moment to visit www.birding.easternshore.org to find out more about the birds in our area.

THINK YOU'VE GOT the best crab cake recipe in town? Or you make the best apple pies? Test your skill and your recipes against all comers on Sept. 21 at Seaside Park. The contest and community picnic starts at 1 and goes until everyone is full! Pack a picnic lunch to share, and bring your best crab cakes and your tastiest apple pie, and let the judging begin!

THOSE YELLOW BUTTERFLIES that have been around town in abundance are sulphur butterflies, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

They feed on the nectar from a variety of red and other brightly colored flowers, often ones that most attract hummingbirds.

The Forest Service says that sulphur butterflies have an average wingspan of about 2-3 inches. The males are typically solid yellow, while the females are yellow with a black border on their wings and a dark spot at the center of each forewing.

SENIOR EXERCISE class takes place Thursdays at the Powelton Presbyterian

Church on Main Street, from 10-11 a.m. The class involves gentle stretching as well as tai-chi and yoga moves, mostly done while seated. It is free and enjoyable.

CURRENT REFLECTIONS GALLERY is now open Fridays from 3-6 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. You can find works there by Carolyn Egerli, a nationally known artist who lives in Wachapreague, as well as paintings by Ted Leonard, Bethany Simpson, Pattee Hipschen Bob Bilicki and the late Guy Wilkins.

THE WACHAPREAGUE GENERAL STORE now has locally made probiotic drinks by Cusheeba Earth Farms in Onley. Jason, Adrienne and their four children own and operate the farm on Locustville Road. They are artists and avid self-directed learners building sustainable systems on their farm and forest property.

CARRIE JACOBSON (yes, me) will have a solo show at the Norfolk Botanical Gardens Sept. 1 through Oct. 31. The core of the show will be paintings on windows, like this one, showing a variety of local birds.

Other paintings, large and small, will also be on display and available for sale.

