



Cape Cod Museum of Natural History

Tidings

July &
August '09

869 Route 6A, Brewster, MA 02631 Ph 508-896-3867 Fax 508-896-8844 - www.ccmnh.org E-Mail info@ccmnh.org

The mission of the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History is to inspire appreciation, understanding and stewardship of our natural environment through discovery and learning.



2009 CCMNH Field Guides

Back Row (L to R): Loretta Ruchinskas, Christian Holleck, Dot Platt, Joe Dillon, Earl Beardsley, Bill Thompson, Ed Sipowicz, Myles Marcus, Irwin Schorr, Bobbie Williams, Todd Kelley, Phil Wick, Nancy Wigley, Ken Durst, Fred Budreski, Mike Bjornholm.

Middle Row (L to R): Diane Smith, Diane Treiber, Leslie Kramer, Debbie Leone, Alice Bonacci, Roberta Best, Betsy Ferris, Gayle Kenerson.

Front Row (L to R): Melanie Lucido, Phyllis Welby, Diane Carlson, Phyllis Briscoe, Helen Bresnahan, Mary Binowski, Marcia Dalton, Bud Ferris.

Photograph/Patty Running Smith

Our Volunteers--the Heart of the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History

Here at the Museum we have wonderful exhibits, a fantastic aquarium, a fabulous gift shop, an incredible library and even a camera on the Osprey nest, but it's the person-to-person connections that help link all of those experiences. Enter our volunteers. Their diverse backgrounds and stories read like a patchwork quilt, enhancing the guest experience.

The art of "giving back" is alive and well at the Museum. A number of our approximately 200 trained, dedicated volunteers do more than one shift or work in more than one area of the Museum. This "variety is the spice of life" idea keeps the museum functioning like a well-oiled machine. Volunteers work in many areas of the Museum: Mudflat Mania!, our field guide program, the library, bee-keeping, archaeology, the office, the front desk, the gift shop, the aquarium and as greeters, just to name a few.

Pam Fearn, Volunteer Coordinator

Field Guides...Look, listen, and learn, then share again.

Our CCMNH Field Guides all have the same goal: to share their love and appreciation of nature with children and adults.

Leading school children in the spring and fall, and visitors in the summer, requires ongoing training for all guides. Veterans continue to learn more every year about the interrelationships within nature and our role as humans. They are truly our "Citizen Scientists."

The current training of 8 sessions consists of morning presentations given by highly qualified naturalists covering all topics that describe the living and non-living components of each ecosystem on the trails at CCMNH. Most sessions involve walks on our trails.

All participants receive material on the history of CCMNH and its mission, and the geological, ecological and cultural history of Stony Brook Valley. Our mentoring system enables new guides to "learn the ropes", as does a "shadowing" requirement.

Emphasis is given on being enthusiastic about the wonders of nature, and the guides' narratives hopefully will motivate curiosity and interest in the natural world.

Bobbie Williams, Field Guide Coordinator



From the Executive Director

Most everyone I have worked with during the past three years knows that one of my passions is utilizing technology as a Museum outreach tool. For example, this past May we ran a teacher's workshop and introduced the participants, and our staff, to the Flip video camera - a 6-ounce, low-cost (\$150 to \$230) marvel that is made for fieldwork. We planned a Mudflat Mania! field trip as part of the workshop with the teachers practicing using the Flip - we now have a short clip of Bud Ferris handling and discussing a horseshoe crab up on our Web site shot by a novice. The Flip will be a great tool for the Stewardship Committee as they start their work of documenting the 400-acres that comprise our outdoor classroom. Everything from invasive species to herring and horseshoe crab counts can now readily have video documentation to support the paper tallies. We're also working on having our OspreyCam not only available to all platforms but in the process, the International Fund for Animal Welfare asked for a live feed from us over to their headquarters in Yarmouth Port. Our ospreys are about to gain international recognition. During the past year we have successfully used ConstantContact to get our message out to approximately 1,800 folks interested in receiving Museum updates and our Web site continues to grow in both content (this month we started to add past issues of Tidings) and documented visitors (approximately 20,000 since January – up 1,000+ from last year at the same time).

Around the Museum



with Todd M. Kelley Field Guide and Naturalist

The natural force of long shore currents that continue to shape the shorelines of Cape Cod has been hard at work at the mouth of Paine's Creek. The creek is trying to migrate

eastwardly toward the parking lot, but the Town of Brewster is trying to stop it and in the process sand is building up and curling in over the marsh. A result of this has been the development of a sandbar island attached to an isolated patch of marsh, which Laughing Gulls have colonized. You will also see Black-bellied Plovers and Willets, which are just two examples of nature's adaptations allowing for a variety of birds to feed, breed and roost within the same shoreline habitat. They have somewhat longer legs and bills to catch prey in the shallow surf like Greater Yellowlegs. There are others with even longer upturned or downturned bills to probe deeper into the mud and sand for worms or other invertebrates. Then there's the speedy "foot stirring" legs and shorter stout bill of the Semipalmated and Piping Plovers to stir up prey close to the surface while the Ruddy Turnstone turns and scatters stones or other debris to find food underneath. So take the time to watch for and listen to the harmony that abounds all around.

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The Museum is very grateful to the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a State agency, for its support.



The Museum is handicapped accessible.

MUSEUM NEWS

Kid's and Summer = KidSummer

Beginning June 29, the Museum's trails will be filled with the sounds of excited children discovering the wonders of nature through the KidSummer program. Each week children ages 3 through 12 are encouraged to explore their world through safe, fun and eye-opening activities designed to stimulate curiosity and encourage a sense of wonder in the natural world.

On a typical day, children may learn about camouflage as an adaptation that helps animals survive. An array of animal puppets are presented and the children are asked to think about the habitat where each animal lives and determine which rely on camouflage. Then, the group heads out for a hike. They are told they will be visiting a woodland habitat to search for wildlife that may be hiding along South Trail. Along the way they stop to look at muskrat tracks in the mud and to observe the killifish swimming in the marsh creeks. As they reach the woods the instructor asks which types of animals or animal signs they may find in this habitat. The children are asked to be very observant, use all their senses and keep a silent count of any animals they see along the way. At the end of the trail they will each explain what they have seen.

The excitement is evident as they spot the first of a dozen different varieties of "snakes" previously hidden along the path. It doesn't seem to matter that these are not real. The rubber models of various species generate obvious exhilaration as each child looks high and low for the hidden wildlife. That afternoon, they will observe live snakes in the Museum and set out cover boards in an attempt to lure wild snakes to hide beneath. Each day children will check the boards to see if they have been successful and record their findings.

Under the beech trees, we find an area with no poison ivy, the perfect spot for an active game of camouflage. This adaptation of Hide-and-Seek is a well known, favorite activity that easily works up their appetites and soon we head to the shade of the big tent for lunch. Here the children socialize with new and old friends from near and far. The program attracts local children as well as many from other states and countries. The diverse experiences they bring add to the perspectives that are shared each day. A local child may really see a moon snail for the first time when he is sharing the experience with a boy from New York City, thrilled at his first mudflat encounter with this alien looking creature.

For a culminating activity, children are provided art materials and clay and asked to create a habitat containing a snake or other animal that is well camouflaged. The day ends with children excitedly sharing their creations and journal entries with parents and grandparents who arrive to pick them up.

**Nancy Church
KidSummer Director**

Do You Know....



Nancy Church KidSummer Director

CCMNH is delighted to have Nancy Church back as KidSummer Director and member of the Education Committee. Nancy started out her CCMNH career as a Field Guide and served as Education Director at the Museum. Now as

KidSummer Director Nancy hires and supervises staff, develops curriculum and coordinates all that happens before, during and after the kids arrive. Her organizational skills and congenial manner keep this successful program flowing smoothly and make it a wonderful experience for almost 600 children who attend each summer.

Nancy grew up in Lawrence, MA, graduated from UMass Boston and received a Master's in Education from UMass Lowell. She moved to the Cape 20 years ago and now lives in West Barnstable. In addition to her work for CCMNH she is Volunteer Coordinator and Interpretive Services Coordinator for Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Falmouth.

Her professional life has led her down several paths. In her 20s, Nancy co-owned a fine dining restaurant where she acquired a love of cooking. After returning to school for her Masters degree she taught high school in Salem, NH, and later worked as a naturalist on a cruise ship, served as Education Director at a New Jersey Aquarium and worked for several years for Mass Audubon at Wellfleet Bay.

Occasionally her work provides an opportunity to engage in her favorite water-related activities such as kayaking across Waquoit Bay to supervise staff or participate in horseshoe crab and fish surveys. Nancy became a certified scuba diver at age 17 and occasionally assists in her family's business, Sea Sports in Hyannis. She enjoys hiking and biking and her love of travel has taken her to such places as Easter Island, Iceland, Costa Rica and Tahiti, to name only a few. When asked to name her favorite place to visit, Nancy states that she feels at home in any salt marsh but can't think of anything she enjoys more than shell fishing in Barnstable Harbor.

CCMNH children and adults alike benefit from the breadth of Nancy's knowledge and experience. We're very glad to have her here again!

Send a Kid to KidSummer

Each year CCMNH provides scholarships to families that are not able to afford the tuition for the KidSummer program. With the increased financial need and requests for scholarships this year, we are hoping that those who can afford it will help sponsor a child this season. Donations may be directed to students from a particular town or school or to fund requests as they come in. Help spread the sense of wonder!

Something New on Wing's Island



Mountain Ash Blossom

Photograph/Sue Carr

There's something new growing on the Island. Actually it germinated about 15 years ago and is now approximately 12-15 ft. high. This year it has flower clusters for the very first time. What is it?... a European Mountain Ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*), also called a Rowan tree. The species name *aucuparia* is from the Latin for "bird catcher." It is a small European tree extensively cultivated in the United States and becoming naturalized.

The heavily-scented small white flower clusters which appear in May and June will produce orange-red berries in late summer which birds, such as the waxwings and thrushes, love to eat. In fact, that is probably how the European Mountain Ash came to be on Wing's Island - with bird droppings! Interestingly, the European Mountain Ash is not a true ash but rather closely related to apples and hawthorns and is in the rose family.

As you walk north on the Wing's Island Trail just past the Wing Monument Trail, look on the right hand side of the path near the Eastern Red Cedar trees and you will see the European Mountain Ash - in about 6 ft from the trail.

The tree has a long tradition in European mythology and folklore. It was considered magical, offering protection from malevolent beings. In England it was thought that it was the tree on which the Devil hanged his mother!

What is special about this tree is that it is not listed as being found wild in Barnstable County in *The Vascular Plants of Massachusetts: A County Checklist*. This will be a first recording.

Nancy Wigley

Available in the Clarence Hay Library!

Crash: A Tale of Two Species* and *Frogs: The Thin Green Line

It's all a matter of timing - **Crash** tells the story of the relationship between the red knot, a small shorebird that migrates between Chile and the Arctic, and the horseshoe crabs that emerge from the deep to lay their eggs off the Mid-Atlantic coast, most notably Delaware Bay. The red knots feast on this banquet, building their strength to make the last leg of their journey north. There they find a mate, lay eggs and raise their chicks who feed on the bugs that are just appearing for the season. If there is a storm along the way...if their supply of food is inadequate...if the crabs are late, the red knots are imperiled and cannot raise their brood. Each species has crashed dramatically in recent years and total extinction is a real possibility.

Frogs explores the effect of a worldwide virus making their hold on life tenuous at best. Both of these exquisite DVDs were produced, written and narrated by Brewster's award-winning filmmaker Allison Argo. She has generously donated them to the Museum's Clarence Hay Library. They are available for members to borrow.

Sue Carr

Our Museum's Bee Program

Beekeeping at CCMNH has a long tradition. I understand that well before I became involved, the Museum had an observation hive. Apparently, it was not maintained and vanished until 2005 when Jean and Roy Smith initiated the purchase of a new, fancy observation hive. Through the Barnstable County Beekeepers Association Claire Desilets and I introduced bees into this new hive. From the beginning it was quite an attraction with the visitors. Over the winter of 2005/2006, I proposed the installation of three full size hives on Museum property to give visitors the opportunity to look into the inner workings of a hive. Dick Wheeler, Jean and Roy Smith supported the proposal immediately. After the initial basic training we had 10 volunteers in our bee group, most of whom are still active in our program. This is our fourth year and our bee group members are:

Bob Bradley	Wendy Fisette
Carol Brown	Nancy Hipp
Ken Cheek	Debbie Leone
Joe Dillon	Tom Miller
Lucy Duffy	Evelyn Russ
Barbara Enos	Ed Sheehan
Charles Firnhaber	Phyllis Welby

This year we expanded the program to two hive openings per week, one on Tuesdays and one on Thursdays. Depending on the number of visitors, we open one or all three hives during each of these events.

The program continues to be very popular with our visitors. In over one hundred hive openings with over 500 participants, no visitor has been stung. Our bee group members have had very few stings, none of which was sufficient to cause anyone to quit the group. After all, a sting is a badge of achievement! The bee year at the Museum ends with the "Honey Bee Jamboree," tentatively scheduled this year for Saturday, October 10. This event has already become a tradition on the Museum's calendar. It features general information about bees and the Program, honey tasting, displays and sale of bee related articles and, most importantly, it is the first day you can buy jars of this year's crop of the Museum's own honey!

George Muhlebach, Museum Bee Coordinator



Bee Group Volunteers Open Southside Bee Hives in April.
Photograph/Maureen Dwyer

Citizen Science in Stony Brook Valley

Counting Herring, Horseshoe Crabs, Butterflies and Vernal Pools

On the Trail of Herring and Horseshoe Crabs

This spring many of the Museum's volunteers participated in two citizen science projects--counting herring entering the 386 acres of spawning area after the run of Paines Creek/Stony Brook, and counting spawning horseshoe crabs at Crosby Beach.

In the spring when the sun shines and the air and water temperatures are in the 50s, the alewives make their way from the Bay to the mill ponds to spawn. Their ancestors have done the same for countless generations. Volunteer monitors count them in ten-minute shifts every hour and a half as they reach their final destination, Lower Mill Pond. Many times they see only a few. But sometimes there are over 100! These small fish are such hardy souls. Before they reach the pond they have swum over a mile upstream and survived a gauntlet of hungry, squawking Herring Gulls.

Towards the end of May the fish head back to the Bay. They swirl around at the top of run, line up tail-first and the current pulls them backwards downstream.

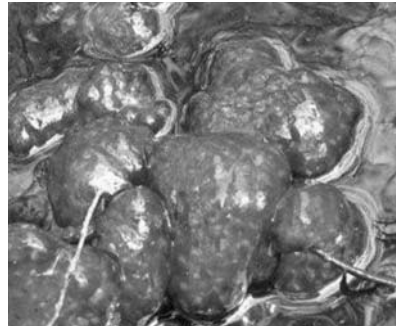
The herring count is in its third year, and results from the first two years suggest that the numbers are fairly stable at 33-36,000, but far below historic levels. Overfishing is believed to have the most impact on their numbers. In the summer they will continue to monitor the egress of the fry herring from the footbridge on the South Trail. Both studies are to obtain baseline data on the run, prior to the salt marsh restoration project involving replacement of the small culvert crossing under Route 6A at Betty's curve. Our partners in the project, the Town of Brewster and APCC/Massachusetts Bay Program, have been organizing collections of additional types of pre-restoration data, but this is a wonderful opportunity for citizen science and public education on the importance of salt marshes.

This is the first year the Museum has participated in the spawning horseshoe crab survey, but Wellfleet Bay/Mass Audubon surveyed Crosby Beach from 2000-2002. Massachusetts Marine Fisheries started more widespread surveys beginning last year in order to assure that the "fishery" (for eel and conch bait) is sustainable. Interest from Museum Friends and volunteers has been great with about 25 individuals being trained. We are not seeing many yet, but the survey has stimulated a lot of public interest in the horseshoe crabs, their importance in testing injected medicine and medical devices, and their ecological importance.

Ellie Johnson & Kathy Sherman

The Brewster Butterfly Count will take place on Saturday, July 25, starting from the Museum at 9 am. All are welcome to join this important day-long count. Alison Robb, leader. Please register with Alison Robb, 508-564-4331 or nature@cape.com. Rain date: July 25.

Yes, Virginia, There Are Vernal Pools in Brewster!



The presence of multiple salamander egg masses are proof that this location is a vernal pool. Photograph/ Jim Van Baalen

For the past two spring seasons CCMNH and the Brewster Conservation Trust have been engaged in a volunteer effort to field verify vernal pools in Brewster. Vernal pools are characterized by springtime ponding, a lack of a reproducing fish population and the presence of Obligate and Facultative species. Obligate species such as mole salamanders, wood frogs and fairy shrimp are indicators that we have identified a vernal pool. We start with aerial photograph maps to locate potential vernal pools. This is followed by field verification, if the potential vernal pool is not on private property. Potential vernal pools can be investigated on private property only with the landowner's permission. Photographs, videos, sketches and maps are then prepared and forwarded to the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP) for certification as a vernal pool. It is then referred to as a Certified Vernal Pool. After certification NHESP notifies the local Conservation Commission and the Mass Department of Environmental Protection. Brewster has about 100 potential vernal pools, 8 are Certified Vernal Pools (by others) and we have documented 11 more that are ready to be submitted to NHESP.

If you would like more information or to volunteer, call Jim Van Baalen (508-896-9048).

Jim Van Baalen

Update on Our Osprey Family

1st Osprey chick hatched: May 25

2nd Osprey chick hatched: May 26

3rd Osprey chick hatched: May 28

'Mrs. Osprey' has our vote as "Mother of the Year!" For 35 days she has sat on her eggs in rain and wind (with no roof) and assistance from 'Mr. Osprey.' For 7-8 weeks after the babies have hatched, she protects, feeds and teaches them. They eat only fish. By summer's end another majestic family has been raised to follow the age-old migration cycle of this extraordinary raptor.

Barbara O'Connell

Mudflat Mania!

Discover the world beneath the sand. Bring your pail and shovel, sunscreen, a hat, water shoes and your curiosity!
Members: Adult/\$4, Senior/\$3, Child/\$2
Non-Members: Adult/\$6, Senior/\$5, Child/\$4

JULY

1 Wednesday 1:30 pm
2 Thursday 2:15 pm
14 Tuesday 11:00 am
16 Thursday 12:30 pm
20 Monday 4:15 pm
27 Monday 10:15 am
29 Wednesday 12:00 pm

AUGUST

3 Monday 4:30 pm
12 Wednesday 10:15 am
14 Friday 12:00 pm
17 Monday 3:00 pm
18 Tuesday 4:00 pm
25 Tuesday 9:30 am
27 Thursday 11:30 am
31 Monday 3:00 pm

Here's to the Friends of the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History!

Friends May Flea Market

The 2009 Flea Market was a grand success. In just one day, we made over \$1200, some \$400 more than last year. The first round of applause goes to those who donated their treasures. The variety and amount was amazing - from a five-piece weather station to a 38 foot yacht!!!! (Any questions about the yacht should be forwarded to Fran Cormier!). This year included a boutique of a number of vintage items and brand new goodies from the Gift Shop.

A round of applause to all those who donated their time.

Grateful thanks to the shoppers who arrived before the 9 am opening and kept us happily busy until the 2 pm closing.

Meredith Pollard

Friends June Plant Sale

This year's PLANT SALE was a wonderful experience under the tent, where the plants and volunteers were comfortable during sporadic rain drops. Total this year? \$1,600!!

The catbird that constantly entertained us for three days seemed to enjoy the variety of plants too. We were complimented many times on the quality and quantity of nice plants. Our thanks to the many volunteers!!

Dee Anson & Marion Horton

For their generous donations, thank you to:
Harwich Stop & Shop
Wild Birds Unlimited of South Yarmouth

Marla Isaac of the New England Reptile and Raptor Exhibits returns to the Museum this summer with two special natural history programs:

Adults: \$8/M, \$10/NM

Children under 12: \$4/M \$5/NM

REPTILES!

Wednesday July 8 4 pm

Reptiles! deals with habitat destruction, poaching, species exploitation, and the management of these amazing animals, both wild and captive. The audience will have the special opportunity to view and appreciate live snakes, lizards, turtles, tortoises and crocodilians.

MEET THE BIRDS OF PREY

Wednesday August 12 4 pm

Meet the Birds of Prey

presents different species of live raptors, better known as birds of prey. Marla will feature such native species as hawks, owls and vultures, including an exciting flight across the auditorium! Feathers, mounts, skulls, skeletons and graphics highlight information about the specialized physiology and natural history of these magnificent birds.

These two programs are geared to the preservation of wildlife and to dispelling the myths surrounding their spectacular worlds.



Ahab's Wife Talk and Book Signing

Friday August 7 7pm

\$5/M \$3/NM

Sena Jeter Naslund, author of the best-selling historical novel *Ahab's Wife*, will be at the Museum for a special talk and book signing. Her only Cape Cod appearance.

Nature Programs Every Day of the Week!

(through Friday, August 28)

Auditorium 1:00 pm

Free with Museum admission

Monday *Going Batty* alternating with *Hissstory of Snakes*
Irwin Schorr
Tuesday *Consider the Summer Skies*
Jarvis Hunt
Wednesday *The Fascinating World of Creepy Crawlies*
(includes spiders, bugs, worms, snails and slugs)
Fran Cormier
Thursday *Return of the Ospreys*
Barbara O'Connell
alternating with
Crabs, Clams and Other Critters
Bud & Betsy Ferris
Friday *Do Whales Have Belly Buttons?*
Myles Marcus



JULY 2009

2009 Exhibit
Under One Sky:
Why Animals Matter

Open to the public
Every Day
9:30 am-4 pm
and for scheduled events.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
KidSummer every weekday Family Field Walks Weekdays: 10:30 am & 2 pm Weekends: 12 noon			1 1 pm Family Nature Program 1:30 pm Mudflat Mania!	2 1 pm Family Nature Program 2:15 pm Mudflat Mania!	3 1 pm Family Nature Program	4
5	6 1 pm Family Nature Program	7 1 pm Family Nature Program	8 1 pm Family Nature Program 4 pm Reptiles!	9 1 pm Family Nature Program	10 1 pm Family Nature Program	11
12	13 1 pm Family Nature Program	14 11 am Mudflat Mania! 1 pm Family Nature Program	15 1 pm Family Nature Program	16 12:30 pm Mudflat Mania! 1 pm Family Nature Program	17 1 pm Family Nature Program	18
19	20 1 pm Family Nature Program 4:15 pm Mudflat Mania!	21 1 pm Family Nature Program	22 1 pm Family Nature Program	23 1 pm Family Nature Program	24 1 pm Family Nature Program	25 9 am Brewster Butterfly Count
26	27 10:15 am Mudflat Mania! 1 pm Family Nature Program	28 1 pm Family Nature Program	29 12 pm Mudflat Mania! 1 pm Family Nature Program	30 1 pm Family Nature Program	31 1 pm Family Nature Program	



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
KidSummer every weekday through 8/21					Family Field Walks Weekdays: 10:30 am & 2 pm Weekends: 12 noon through 8/28	
2	3 1 pm Family Nature Program 4:30 pm Mudflat Mania!	4 1 pm Family Nature Program	5 1 pm Family Nature Program	6 1 pm Family Nature Program	7 1 pm Family Nature Program 7 pm Talk & Book Signing Sena Jeter Naslund	8
9	10 1 pm Family Nature Program	11 1 pm Family Nature Program	12 10:15 am Mudflat Mania! 1 pm Family Nature Program 4 pm Meet the Birds of Prey	13 1 pm Family Nature Program	14 12 pm Mudflat Mania! 1 pm Family Nature Program	15
16	17 1 pm Family Nature Program 3 pm Mudflat Mania!	18 1 pm Family Nature Program 4 pm Mudflat Mania!	19 1 pm Family Nature Program	20 1 pm Family Nature Program	21 KidSummer Ends 1 pm Family Nature Program	22
23	24 1 pm Family Nature Program	25 9:30 am Mudflat Mania!	26 1 pm Family Nature Program	27 11:30 am Mudflat Mania!	28 1 pm Family Nature Program	29 10 am-2 pm Mills and Gills
30	31 3 pm Mudflat Mania!	1 pm Family Nature Program		1 pm Family Nature Program		



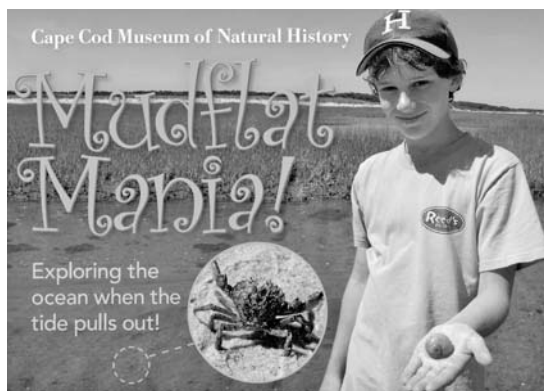
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about membership
call the Museum at
508-896-3867.**

**Check our website
www.ccmnh.org
for
on-going programs.**