



Duxbury Beach Programs Summer 2008



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Background –

Each summer for the past 23 years, Mass Audubon has coordinated and led educational programs at Duxbury Beach on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays during the months of July and August. These programs have been funded through the generosity of Duxbury Beach Reservation, Inc.

Mass Audubon's South Shore Adult Education Coordinator, John Galluzzo, coordinated the programs during the summer of 2008. Twenty-six programs were offered this year with topics ranging from horseshoe crab studies to visits to Gurnet Lighthouse to birding excursions. Leaders included Mass Audubon staff naturalists, experts from other Mass Audubon departments, scientists working for other nonprofit organizations, local historians and other local specialists. A complete program listing is attached.

These programs are well received by participants due to the expert leadership, access to restricted parking at Duxbury Beach, and free admission. The Duxbury Harbormaster and his staff continue to be very cooperative and helpful, allowing our vans access to the beach, directing participants to the program, and contacting us when there are exciting sightings that we can share with our program participants.

Outreach –

We continue to send weekly press releases to the *Boston Globe*, *Globe South*, *Globe* online calendar; *Patriot Ledger*, *Old Colony Memorial*, *Brockton Enterprise*; Memorial Press Group/CNC (Mariners and Reporters); *Duxbury Clipper*, *Hull Times*, *Whitman Express*, *Hanson Express*. These listings are usually placed in the calendar section of the publication. A sample press release is attached.

In addition to local press releases, the Memorial Press Group/CNC received a monthly calendar at least two months in advance and the Plymouth Country Convention and Visitors Bureau received a quarterly calendar one month in advance. Papers use this advance notice to coordinate photo opportunities at upcoming programs. Photographers from the Reporter, Clipper and Mariner newspapers joined us on several occasions.

All Duxbury Beach events were posted on Mass Audubon's web site www.massaudubon.org. Ray Brown of WATD 95.9 FM's Talkin' Birds promoted the bird programs each week on the radio, from 9:30-10 am on Sundays.

Monthly black-and-white flyers were developed and distributed to local libraries and community bulletin boards. Programs are also highlighted in our Summer newsletter and in our enewsletters.

At each program, staff or volunteers from Mass Audubon were present with information on the organization, other educational opportunities, and information on upcoming Duxbury Beach programs.

Participation:

On average, each program had 8-14 participants. While there were many regulars who attended almost every program, specific topics drew in new participants (the Massachusetts Ocean Act, Horseshoe Crabs with Sara Grady of the North and South Rivers Watershed Association, Gurnet Lighthouse with Alden Ringquist). The tours of the Gurnet Lighthouse continue to be very popular with 25 participants, as did the birding programs with more than 12 participants per program. The family programs had a smaller following than in past years though several families attend almost every week and a few loyal participants mentioned that they come each year when they are in the South Shore area. This past summer families enjoyed time with our part-time naturalists and camp staff.

Geographically, approximately 75% of the participants were from the Town of Duxbury, with the remaining participants drawn primarily from the adjoining towns of Marshfield and Kingston. Other towns represented include: West Bridgewater, Norwood, Plymouth, and Cohasset. Birding programs still draw from a slightly larger geographical area. I suspect that the opportunity to have van access to Duxbury Beach was the draw since this area hosts great bird habitat and always has interesting sightings.

Other Programs

During the rest of the calendar year, Mass Audubon runs additional programs either wholly or partially on Duxbury Beach. Each January and February, a staff member leads a "Snowy Owl Prowl" on Duxbury Beach, offering controlled access in winter to the beach for birders interested in tracking down this elusive species, known to spend the season here. November is typically reserved for a special "Surfbirds and Surfmen" program explaining the history of life-saving of shipwrecked sailors on the beach in addition to basic birding. Sporadically throughout the year, our weekly Friday Morning Birders program spends portions of its three and a half hour program exploring the beach for seasonal migrants. During the spring and fall, we also lead beach ecology programs for local school children. These pre-registered programs are not scheduling during the months of July and August to avoid confusion with the Reservation-sponsored free offerings. We appreciate the Reservation's willingness to allow us to utilize the unique habitats and opportunities that are available at Duxbury Beach throughout the year.

Citizen Science

Mass Audubon has undertaken the project of updating its Breeding Bird Atlas in order to learn about changes in breeding areas of Massachusetts bird species. All data from Plymouth County sites is being coordinated through South Shore Sanctuaries. During the spring and summer of 2008, Mass Audubon Coastal Waterbird Program personnel doubled as "atlasers" for the Breeding Bird Atlas 2 project and contributed data toward this effort. This is part of a statewide, five-year censusing project.

Recommendations for Summer 2009:

- Develop a poster with color photos and program schedule to be distributed by June 15 to local libraries and community bulletin boards – paid for by donated funds available at Mass Audubon. We will continue to strive to meet this goal. Obtaining confirmation from leaders has proven to be an obstacle to completing this project.
- Revive practice of posting the complete listing of Duxbury Beach Programs in our summer newsletter so that we can reach a broader audience and increase participation.
- Explore possibility of birding trips focused on specific section of the beach instead of traveling the entire length.

Attachments:

Photographs

Program schedules from summer 2008

Sample Press release