

Letter from the editor

Dear readers,

Days of summer are upon us, and as you put on your rosy, root-beer, or spruce-colored glasses, once again here is my nagging reminder to protect yourself by tossing sunscreen or sunblock into your beach bag or tackle box, right along with *Wrack Lines*.

Perhaps no admonition is needed, as this year seems to be one of those in which many people are increasingly aware of, and concerned about, the natural world around them—which brings me to the thrust of this issue: the articles collected herein would seem relatively unrelated at first glance, but if you look closer at the contents, you'll find that they all involve making keen observations of one sort or another.



We have a painter looking at New England and New York with an artist's eye for beauty in colors, textures, lighting and relationships; we have scientists looking for the vestiges of fabric stain repellents and other chemical products in the body tissues of Arctic polar bears and the air they breathe. (To show how perspectives have changed, once we marvelled at how polar bears managed to survive the rigors of the frigid Arctic ice and snow; now we wonder how they can survive losing it.) A land trust, and a habitat specialist, observe changes in populations of two attractive flowers, one of which is wanted and one of which is not, in terms of restoration success. We have some university researchers observing through odd-looking instruments of many sorts the various dynamic forces and changing parameters that continually shape our favorite estuary, Long Island Sound, and others looking at a host of miniscule "beasties" wafting in the waves of the world's oceans. An educator who has seen the ephemeral but profound seasonal and storm changes on the coastline through his great-grandfather's paintings, captures a dramatic new scene of change through his camera shutter. Finally, we have some special teachers whose lucky students will learn to observe Long Island Sound beaches, rocky shores, and marshes through a process of questioning and discovery.

I hope that you will be inspired by this issue to take a new look, combining more than one observational technique and perspective, at the beauty and power of the forces driving the oceans and our own Long Island Sound. As for me, having bid this issue adieu on its way to press, I believe I'll let the seaweed tickle my happy feet on the wrack line.

Happy summer,

Peg Van Patten, editor

P.S. A hearty thank you to those who filled out the mini-survey card included in the previous issue. We've already acted upon many of your suggestions for future issues. We welcome your feedback any time!