

From the Editor's Desk

Dear readers,

I hope you're planning some terrific activities for your summer fun. My favorite summer fun is always a trip to the beach—not so much to bask in the sun, but rather to see what interesting seaweeds have made their way to our shores. Recently I did just that, at the little beach right on our campus at UConn Avery Point, and I discovered something unusual.

I thought I'd share with you what I found, as it has piqued much curiosity amongst my science-minded colleagues. The photo shows this very odd kelp specimen that had washed ashore, still clenching tightly the pebble that failed to become a secure home for this organism.

My unusual find has all the elements of normal kelp that we find in the Northeastern United States—brown pigment, a flat blade, a stipe (the part that resembles a stem) and the claw-like holdfast. Nothing abnormal there. What is strange is the shape. It is quite rounded, whereas our kelp is normally very long and slender in its proportions. Also, there is a hole in the center, which caused one of my colleagues to call it a “kelp doughnut”.

A small hunk of this kelp has now travelled to New Brunswick, to have its DNA profile worked up. The experts who have seen its photo have two minds about it: 1) it may be young *Laminaria digitata*, which has not yet divided itself into finger-like “digits”. 2) It might be a species called *Laminaria groenlandica*, which surprisingly does not come from Greenland, but rather from the West Coast. The latter sometimes takes a rounded shape in very calm environments, I'm told.

It seems appropriate to put its pretty picture in the magazine—after all, it is named *Wrack Lines*! A wrack line, for those of you who are new to this publication, is the assortment of “stuff” the tide brings in and then leaves behind when it ebbs. In Old English, it meant “driven by the sea,” a good description of our motivation for the magazine.

I hope you enjoy this issue as much as I enjoyed finding my strange specimen where the sea meets the shore, and that you are also inspired to try discovering fresh seafood at the farmers' markets in Connecticut.

Finally, hearty congratulations to our photo contest winners, whose art appears on the inside back cover. Thanks to all who submitted. As always, we welcome your suggestions and feedback.

Happy summer!



What is it? A kelp doughnut? You never know what you might find in the wrack line.

Peg Van Patten

Editor