On Island Animals

Regional Biologist Philip Bozenhard of Maine’s Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife sent us the following response to our recent letter about the skunks on Peaks: "...it is unfortunate that skunks have been released on Peaks Island. Skunks can become a real nuisance when they build up in numbers, not only to the human population, but also to the ground nesting birds and other wildlife. My recommendation would be to remove the skunks as soon as possible since they are not native to the island and will no doubt cause many problems in the future."

The two skunks that were originally released on Peaks a year or so ago have reportedly increased to five. If you would like information about removing the skunks from the island, please call Philip Bozenhard at 657-3258.

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Two declawed cats (one of them 12 years old) were abandoned outdoors last month on Peaks when their owner moved out of state. Friends of Peaks Island Animals was notified of the cat’s situation and took them to the Animal Refuge League’s shelter. Both cats, however, were diagnosed with FIV (the virus that causes feline AIDS) and had to be euthanized. FIV is spread through the bites and scratches that occur in fighting and is also sexually transmitted; an infected mother cat will pass

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Brown Tail Moth - Nightmare? Or just an itch?

The City of Portland and the PINA Environmental Committee are concerned about the brown tail moth, and nobody on Peaks Island wonders why. Yet even while we nurse our itchy rashes, some of us wonder if these symptoms could become an excuse to coat all the islands with chemicals.

Dimilin, which was sprayed on Little Diamond Island, is not 100% effective against the browntail moth, and is potentially threatening to the Crustacean family (lobsters, crabs, shrimp, barnacles) destroys butterflies as well as other insects, and negatively impact those creatures higher up the food chain (us?).

Dr. Harold Hackett, a botanist who summers on Little Diamond says mechanical removal of the Browntail moth is far preferable and more effective solution to our infestation than widespread spraying of diflubenzuron. This is the chemical (marketed as ‘Dimilin’) the City of Portland has arranged to spray over Little Diamond this spring, and it has been implicated in what Hackett calls a ‘chlorotic impact (bleaching of the foliage) on beech, maple, oak, and newly opened leaves of many species. I first saw it on my rhubarb." Dr. Hackett believes that the effect may not actually come from the chemical, but from the chemical’s carrier.

"Diflubenzuron can’t be stirred into water. (The mixture as it is actually sprayed) is a trade secret, we can’t find out how the company put it together without going through the Freedom of Information Act." Along with the insect activity, this foliage is "severely threatening" to Little Diamond’s historic forest.

More definitively, the chemical (together with a previous application of BT) has caused Little Diamond’s "diversity and numbers of insects to go into a dramatic decline." As diversity of insects decreases, resistant insects (such as cockroaches, fleas, ticks) have less competition, and greater opportunities to multiply unchecked. A diverse population of insects helps to hold all species in check. As concerned as Hackett is over the spraying, he is strong in his support of mechanical removal.

"There is no doubt," says he, "that the browntail moth infestation is potentially very serious. It’s out of control."

"The moth is driving the evolution of the forest (Little Diamond’s forest is listed in the National Historic Register) here," says Dr. Hackett. What scares many of the caterpillar washer’s is how it has developed an appetite for new foliage. The moth is "driving the evolution of the forest." As Brown Tail Moth caterpillar spines are being blamed for spots that usually look like flea bites or mosquito bites, sometimes covering significant areas (and which area isn’t?) of the body with lots of unconnected dots. Those of us who have contracted the rash often find future coqunts produce less severe reactions. Clearly many of us are developing immunity to the spines.

Salt water soaks seem to be the most effective way to get rid of the rash. After washing off the spines in the cold ocean, you can continue with a daily bath using about one cup salt in a tub of hot water (the water should taste salty), or else mix one tablespoon salt into a quart of water, soak a towel with the solution and apply to the itch as often as you like. You can follow the soak with an application of either Echinacea extract or calamine lotion: these are anti-inflammatory and soothing to bug bites and caterpillar spines. Internally, teas of fresh violet leaf, jewel weed, or rosehips (or Vitamin C, 500 mg) have been a bigger topic than it’s appetite for trees, although usually the rash is a minor irritation, especially if it is treated at once with a dip in the ocean (or a salt water soak). Elizabeth Rudenburg (at our island clinic) had not seen a child affected by the caterpillars at the time we spoke. "Some adults don’t get the rash at all," she said. "We all have different degrees of sensitivity, different immune systems." The rash that the Brown Tail Moth caterpillar spines are being blamed for is spots that usually look like flea bites or mosquito bites, sometimes covering significant areas (and which area isn’t?) of the body with lots of unconnected dots. Those of us who have contracted the rash have found future coqunts produce less severe reactions. Clearly many of us are developing immunity to the spines.

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From the Editor:

Want to publish something anonymously? For a change of pace, as an experiment, we are going to break with our tradition and publish anonymously on request. So many people have things they’d like to say, but out of shyness or fear of repercussions, they tell me “I don’t want my name on it.” OK, we’ll give it a try, just to give everyone one less reason not to write. However, the editor needs to know who you are (I’ll keep it under my hat), and we will print your home town if you don’t live on the island. Please restrict your criticisms to ideas, not people, and include your phone number.

We’ve made an executive decision to be flexible about deadlines until we can find someone other than Albert and I to do the layout, though we liked it better when we were able to keep a schedule. Please talk your friend with the pagemaker or comparable program into taking a turn or two doing layout, into contributing their opinions, articles, poems, cartoons, news.

Many thanks to our new sponsors this issue, the snazzy jazzy Will’s Restaurant and good old-fashioned Peaks Island Fuel, as well as to the reality checks, Port Island Reality and Ashmore Reality, the Divine Betty Sterling, the Dashing Hellers, and The Courageous Peaks Island Lion’s Club, and all our sponsors whose combined contributions have kept this journal going.

Our current project is a Peaks Island Service Directory. If you are heading up an island service, business, committee, club or if you can be a resource in any hobby or profession, please send a note or call so that we can include you. Listings are free (ads will cost you). Send your information to 7 Central Ave. Ext., or pick up a directory postcard at Feeney’s next week.

Boat Business

New Boat! Look for the Maquoit 2 to be joining Casco Bay Island Transit District fleet by mid-July.

Update on the Peaks’ Passenger Wharf - As most Peaks Islanders already know from several articles in the Portland Press Herald, the company originally hired by the State to construct our new passenger pier, Gloucester Dredge and Dock, has declared bankruptcy. According to Rob Elder, the Department of Transportation’s representative on the Casco Bay Line’s Board of Directors, “three quarters of the heavy construction work (on the pier) is already completed.” The State Department of Transportation has its legal staff working with the firm’s bonding company and is navigating the situation through bankruptcy court in Boston. The challenge, of course, is separating the state’s assets from all the others involved with the firm’s bankruptcy. Although Elder remains optimistic about a resolution to the situation, he is hesitant to make specific comments or to discuss details because the case is in litigation.

Contrary to rumors that have been heard, the bonding company’s solvency does not seem to be a problem in this situation. Peaks Islanders who would like to voice their opinions can contact the following individuals:

Rob Elder, State Dept. of Transportation, CBITD Board of Directors Meeting on Peaks Island will be held on Thursday, August 4th, 7:45 P.M., at the Peaks Island Community Center. Stephen Schuit

The Good Things About the Brown Tail Moth:

1. While the caterpillar is nothing special (a white broken stripe down the center of it’s back, with red spots), the moth is “flowery white with a beautiful brown tip. Very very beautiful and handsome.”

2. You can cut out infested leaf clusters next fall and winter, dump them in sea water, they don’t need to be burned. After August, when the moths appear, those that land near outside lights can be swatted.

3. “A population that grows with enormous rapidity will go down very rapidly, (for a number of reasons). The last major infestation (in 1941) lasted three years [with intensive manual eradication measures].

4. Hanging laundry indoors (or using a dryer) would prevent many rashes.

3. Bee venom, which has similarities to the caterpillar venom, is used therapeutically in the treatment of chronic inflammatory diseases. So the itch just might relieve our aches! Jenny Yasi
**News Bites**

**Deer, oh Deer.** The Deer Management Notebook compiled by the environmental committee of PINA is available at the Peaks Island Library. It contains information on various methods of deer population control, Lyme disease (which has not yet been detected in Peaks Island’s ticks, by the way), and suggestions on how to protect gardens from damage by deer. There is also a page for you to contribute your own solutions. Joan Blake is using egg emulsion, Sam McCain suggests peanut butter on a one strand electric fence (one taste and they won’t come back.) I saw a deer leap ten feet up into the air after it’s tender nose met the needle sharp spine of my prized row of milk thistle. Joan watched a doe nursing her fawn within a very close range. “She washed it’s ear, tail, it was a fantastic, once in a lifetime sight, I’m sure!”

After the fourth of July weekend, anyone who visited the transfer station (former dump) was astounded at the mounds of refuse piled between, over and around the dumpsters. All Peaks Island refuse must be shipped off the island, at quite an expense to the City. Some summer residents were surprised, as they deposited old furniture alongside the dumpsters, to learn that there is a ‘tipping fee’ charged for deposit of oversize refuse. Also, refrigerators must have the freon professionally removed (and stickered) before they will be accepted by the City.

Many islanders are saying they have never seen so many summer visitors to the island, and in Kathleen Beecher’s words, “It’s been a good crowd.” More people have taken the lead from Brad’s Bike Shop and are biking, or walking, making the island more pleasant for all of us. CBL must be wishing they’d had bike racks installed on the Machigonne...

**Animals, continued from pg. 1**

the disease on to her kittens, who will, in turn, pass it on to their kittens, who will in turn pass it on to kittens and other cats through fights and sexual encounters. The best way to prevent the spread of FIV is to keep them indoors. Although a preventative inoculation is available (there is no cure), some veterinarians won’t administer it as there are indications that it may make cats more susceptible to the virus. It’s also important to spay and neuter cats to prevent the spread of FIV, which like feline leukemia, occurs frequently on Peaks.

Sixty-four animals received rabies shots at Dr. Tim Friel’s annual island veterinary clinic on April 30. If your pets are not up to date on their rabies shots, please have them inoculated now, before rabies is a problem on Peaks.

June 21 is the summer solstice and the beginning of the summer Cheng-Ti (four seasons) cycle. The Southern Hemisphere is also entering winter on this day. In the northern hemisphere, the sun is near its highest point in the sky at the summer solstice, resulting in longer days and shorter nights. The solstice marks the longest day of the year, and it is often associated with celebrations of renewal and growth.

As far systemic reactions are concerned, Dr. Rudenburg says, “I haven’t seen any respiratory distress, but it’s potential,” as the hairs are microscopic, carried on the wind, and could be kicked up by lawn mowing.

Be wary if July becomes dry and dusty- use a painter’s mask for lawn mowing. However, summer is also asthma and ozone season, so it would be difficult to blame brown tail moth for wheezing that is heard all over New England at this time of year.

Violet leaf (tea or cooked like spinach) is demulcent and soothing to the lungs, and along with mullein, mallow leaves, and sea weeds (Irish moss especially) is used by herbalists to soothe and prevent many summer lung irritations. So if you are having breathing difficulties, see your Doctor, but don’t be too quick to blame it on our famous caterpillar.

**Itch, continued from pg. 1**

mg. 4 to 8 times per day) are antihistimine. By taking the time to care for ourselves naturally, we not only avoid unpleasant reactions to modern medications, we build confidence in ourselves and our own ability to heal. If the simple tricks are not enough, see your health professional.

Reducing fats, emphasizing the essential fatty acids in flax seed oil and herring, walnut oils, and evening primrose oil also significantly regulates the body’s immune and hormonal responses, reducing the severity of many inflammatory conditions, including allergic responses. As far systemic reactions are concerned, Dr. Rudenburg says, “I haven’t seen any respiratory distress, but it’s potential,” as the hairs are microscopic, carried on the wind, and could be kicked up by lawn mowing.

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Jenny Yasi

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Donna Marchinetti

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July 1994
Will's

Will's want to thank Peaks Island for all of your support last winter!

We are now offering our All You Can Eat BBQ Daily between two and five p.m. $4.00 Adults, $2.00 children under 12 years old. Children must be accompanied by an adult. We are pleased to announce that we are now serving Gritty's Best Bitters, and Shipyard Ale, from our local breweries. Due to oven space we can not offer pizza until Labor Day - we will keep you posted.

Will's hours: Monday- Thursday 11-9, Friday 11-10, Saturday 10-10, Sunday 10-9

The Brunch Menu is served Saturday and Sunday 10a.m.- 2 p.m.

Lunch (Mon-Fri) 11-2

BBQ (Daily) 2-5

Dinner Daily 5-9 (till 10 Fri & Sat)

Brunch Saturday and Sunday 10-2

Our appologies for any inconvenience: We cannot accept credit cards. Cash and checks are accepted.

"Ignorance is the source of all suffering."

Thich Nhat Hahn in Old Path White Clouds

July 1994