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## Casco Bay Currents Spring 2019

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Wed, Mar 13, 2019 at 11:10 AM

Casco Bay Currents, an email newsletter of the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership

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## Spring 2019

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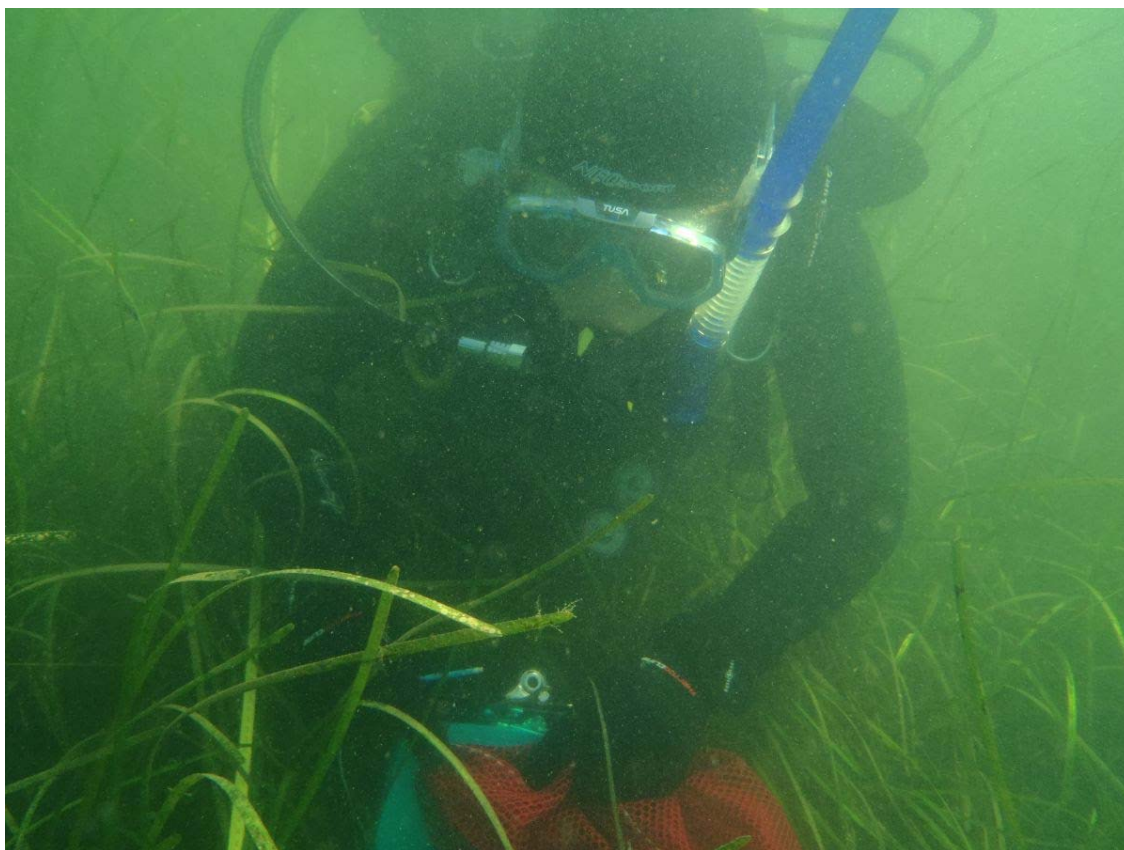


## Welcome,

to the Spring 2019 edition of *Casco Bay Currents*, the newsletter for Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP).

You are receiving this quarterly email newsletter because you signed up for our newsletters in the past. If you wish to unsubscribe, please click the link at the bottom of this page. If this was forwarded by a friend and you would like to subscribe, you can do so at the bottom of our [website home page](#).

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## Eelgrass Monitoring Reports Now Available

Eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) is a seagrass that forms extensive intertidal and subtidal beds in Casco Bay. It provides food for migratory winter waterfowl and critical nursery habitat for fish and shellfish. It also helps sustain water quality by stabilizing sediments and filtering nutrients and suspended particles.

Eelgrass thrives in clean water where adequate light can reach its slender leaves. Beds become stressed when water quality declines due to increased suspended sediments and excess nitrogen, which fuels algal growth and reduces the availability of light. It can also be damaged or lost due to dredging, boat propellers, moorings, anchors, docks, and shellfish dragging. In addition, the invasive European green crab (*Carcinus maenas*) can decimate eelgrass beds by foraging and burrowing in vegetation. According to Angela Brewer of Maine DEP's Marine Unit, who carried out 2018 monitoring of eelgrass in Casco Bay, "Eelgrass is such an interesting and dynamic species because its mere presence or absence, and condition, can indicate so much about the surrounding environment."

In 2013, CBEP and Maine DEP facilitated mapping of eelgrass beds using high-resolution aerial photographs and underwater videography. That survey quantified eelgrass bed coverage as 3,650 acres, representing a loss of more than 55 percent from the 2001-2 acreage. Much of the eelgrass decline appears to have occurred between 2012 and 2013, coinciding with a population



## Partner Profile: Angela Brewer, Maine DEP



Angela Brewer leads the Marine Unit for the Bureau of Water Quality at the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The Unit carries out two state mandated programs including the Marine Environmental Monitoring Program and the Surface Water Ambient Toxics program. Angela directs efforts for the non-toxics aspects of marine

monitoring, which focus on common water quality and biological indicators that are used to determine whether Maine's marine waters are attaining the goals set for them by the Legislature.

Angela works with regulatory staff at DEP to review applications for pollutant discharges and coastal development projects, and to communicate technical interpretations of information gathered by permittees. She also interacts with non-profit volunteer monitoring organizations to plan collaborative projects with common goals. One such collaborative project is the Casco Bay Eelgrass Consortium, of which CBEP is a member. To better assess current eelgrass coverage, the Consortium commissioned Bay-wide mapping of eelgrass beds in 2018. (See adjoining article for more information.)

Angela is happy to be back near her childhood roots in Central Maine and undergraduate days at Bowdoin College, where she graduated before moving on to gain a M.S. at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Last year, Angela was fortunate to hear famed marine biologist and explorer Sylvia Earle speak, and was inspired by her desire to "democratize access to the sea." Says Angela, "I expect that my connection to the ocean in part stems from having spent a lot of time with my face down in between the kelp blades, eelgrass shoots, and peeking under ledges and in cracks to locate the least conspicuous and often most beautiful taxa. The average person could gain a better respect for the ocean by getting right down in it and looking more closely at all that is present. Put down the fishing pole and put on a snorkel, take your kids to tidepools and turn over rockweed, establish an appreciation for what still lives in the ocean and how important it is to protect our Maine heritage. And spread the word that there is much more value to the Maine coast than the species that end up on our plates."



## CBEP Habitat Protection Fund Spring 2019 Request for Proposals

CBEP is offering grants to support the permanent protection of targeted habitats in the Casco Bay watershed through its Habitat Protection Fund.

A total of \$20,000 is available this round.

**Proposals are due by April 12, 2019.**

For a copy of the Request for Proposals, please follow [this link](#).

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## 2019 Casco Bay Community Grant Awards

CBEP received nine proposals totaling \$27,000 from schools, nonprofit organizations and community groups, and made awards for four projects in the Casco Bay Islands, Portland, and Harpswell.

You can read much more about these projects in the articles below:

[Grants connect communities with Casco Bay estuaries](#), The Forecaster, February 27, 2019

[Foundation hopes to forge a connection between communities and aquaculture](#), The Times Record, February 27, 2019







**Stream  
Smart**

*Connecting fish and wildlife habitat  
while protecting roads and public safety.*

[StreamSmartMaine.org](http://StreamSmartMaine.org)

## ROAD CROSSING WORKSHOP

**TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2019**

Fields Pond Audubon Center, Holden

**THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2019**

Gilsland Farm Audubon Center, Falmouth

**REGISTRATION: 8 - 8:30 am**

**WORKSHOP: 8:30 am - 12:30 pm**

**\$35 registration fee**

*(includes refreshments)*

### **This workshop is designed for professionals responsible for road-stream crossings**

- We will cover road-stream crossing projects from site assessment to permitting and installation.
- Emphasis is on maintaining and restoring aquatic habitat and economic values of the stream.
- Workshop presenters include professionals from state and federal agencies and statewide non-profits.
- Participants can receive recertification credit for Maine DEP's Voluntary Contractor Certification Program.

**Online Registration and agenda at  
[maineaudubon.org/streamsmart](http://maineaudubon.org/streamsmart)**

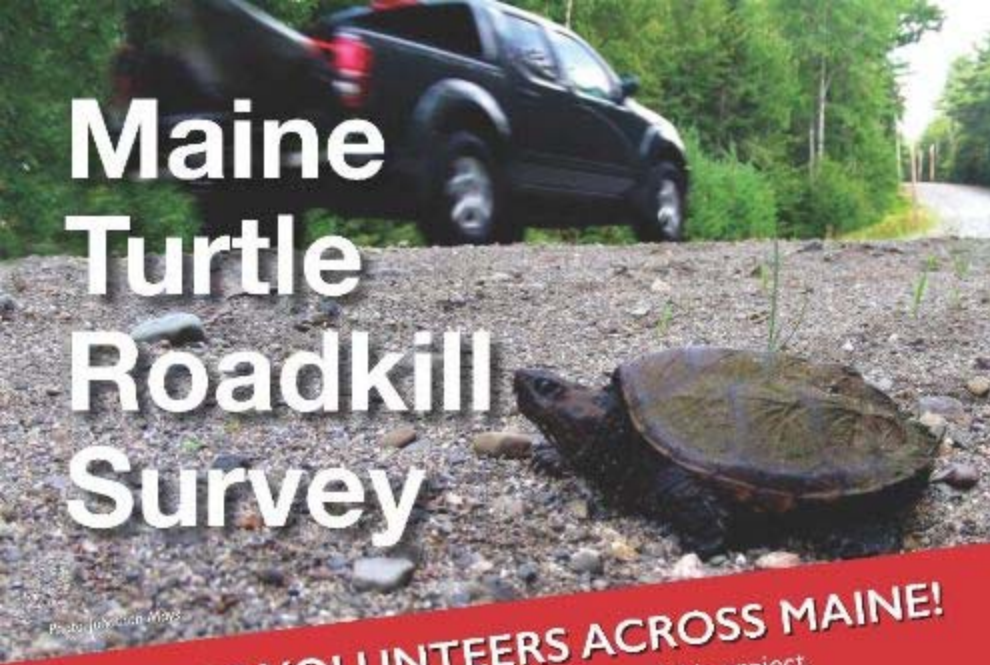
For more information contact **Sarah Haggerty**, [shaggerty@maineaudubon.org](mailto:shaggerty@maineaudubon.org), 207-781-2330 ext. 225

This workshop is made possible by support from the Maine Department of Transportation and additional partners. See a full partner list at [streamsmartmaine.org](http://streamsmartmaine.org)

## **Stream Crossing Upgrade Grant Program!**

The Department of Environmental Protection is preparing the Stream Crossing Grant Program for release in April 2019. If your community has culverts that need to be replaced, this program can help. This competitive grant program matches local funding for the upgrade of municipal culverts at stream crossings to increase community safety and improve fish and wildlife habitats. Two competitive rounds of funding totalling \$5 million are anticipated in 2019. For





**Maine  
Turtle  
Roadkill  
Survey**

Photo: Joy Ann Marr

**SEEKING VOLUNTEERS ACROSS MAINE!**  
Your help is essential to the success of this project.  
Please attend a training session to find out what you can do.

**RSVP**  
maineaudubon.org/events  
(207) 781-2330 ext. 225  
Please let us know if you would like  
to participate, but cannot attend.

Free to the public  
**TRAINING SESSIONS**

**Saturday, March 30, 9 am - 12:30 pm**  
Warden Service Headquarters  
15 Game Farm Road, Gray

**Saturday, April 6, 9 am - 12:30 pm**  
Fields Pond Audubon Center, Holden



It's estimated that one million vertebrates are killed on U.S. roadways each day. That's about one every 11 seconds.

Roadkill is one of the biggest threats to turtle populations in Maine, so Maine Audubon is looking for volunteers to help identify where they are most at risk from traffic as they move across the landscape. To help address this problem, citizen science volunteers are monitoring roadways around Maine to help identify which species of turtles are crossing where, and which road crossings are most hazardous to Maine's turtles.

Interested in getting involved? Contact [Maine Audubon](#) or call the number above to RSVP for one of the training sessions. More information [here](#).



You can read [here](#) about some of the good work CBEP partners did last year on behalf of the Bay.

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## Mark Your Calendars: CBEP and Partner Events

- **March 20:** *CBEP Management Committee meeting.* Info [here](#).
- **March 28:** *Maine Sustainability & Water Conference.* Info [here](#).
- **April 4:** *Stream Smart Road Crossing Workshop,* Gilsland Farm Audubon Center, Falmouth. Info [here](#).
- **May 17:** *Southern Maine Children's Water Festival.* Register [here](#).  
[Facebook page](#).
- **June 12:** *CBEP Management Committee meeting.* Info [here](#).
- **June 13-14:** *The Beaches Conference,* Kittery Community Center. Info [here](#).

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**Our mailing address is:**

University of Southern Maine Muskie School of Public Service  
Wishcamper Center #229, 34 Bedford Street  
Portland, ME 04104

Phone: (207) 780-4820

Fax: (207) 228-8460

[cbep@maine.edu](mailto:cbep@maine.edu)

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