



Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Field Notes Fall 2010

Welcome

Welcome to the fall edition of Field Notes, a newsletter for our Great Bay Community Land Stewards and friends. What a beautiful summer and fall it has been. I spent a great deal of it outside with my son, who just turned one. I loved seeing the wonder on his face as he watched the birds fly by or the leaves fluttering in the wind. He kept lifting up his hand to catch them. He loved playing with the crickets and letting the ants crawl over his toes. It has definitely been a time of observation and appreciation.

CLS News

To assist New England researchers, keep your eye out for ants as you are visiting your properties this fall.



Researchers Seek Reports of Invasive European Fire Ants

Biologists at the University of Connecticut are studying an invasive stinging ant

that is spreading in New England. They are seeking help from nature centers, wildlife sanctuaries, and similar organizations to find locations of this species. The ant, *Myrmica rubra*, is sometimes called the "European fire ant." Although several species of ants sting if provoked, *M. rubra* is more aggressive towards people than are the native ants of New England.

The sting is painful and may cause swelling and itching for a day or two, so anyone unfortunate enough to run into this insect usually remembers. For this reason, we are often able to locate the ant through reports from people who are active outdoors. Please let us know if you have heard of anyone being stung by ants in your area. Specific locations are very useful, such as street addresses or names of rivers, ponds or other landscape features. They'd be happy to answer any questions ([more info here](#)), and confirm identifications. The ants are reddish brown and about a quarter of an inch in length. Some basic information (including a photo) is available from [Wikipedia](#). Sent reports to: ant_hunt@uConn.edu



Great Bay News

The Reserve has been very busy in the field this fall. The RTK (real time kinematic) GPS unit, on loan to us from NOAA for 6 weeks, is up and running. We got quite a response from our plea for help, as the equipment requires a team of three people each

day. We had a whopping 38 people respond!

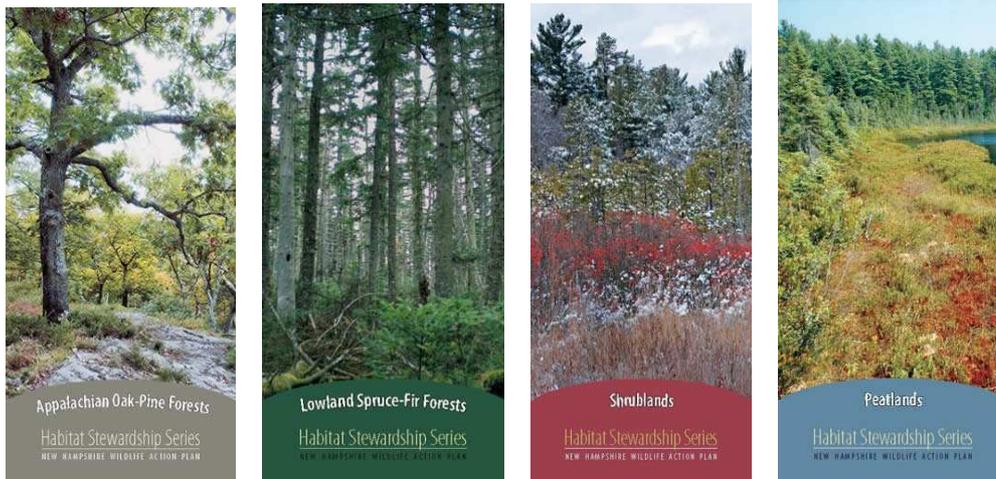
The data collected with this unit will be used to generate digital elevation models of three salt marshes which will be used as part of a [national monitoring project](#) measuring relative sea level change and ecological impacts of climate change.

Thanks to these generous volunteers who have already given 245 hours of their time, we have been able to use their hours as leverage for over \$6,000 in match for Federal Grants that are supporting these projects. That's the equivalent of having another full time staff member on for 6 1/2 weeks. Pretty impressive considering we aren't even done yet!

In addition to this work, the accuracy assessment for the Habitat Mapping project will be underway for the rest of the fall. Once completed, this data will be submitted to the NERRS [CDMO \(centralized data management office\)](#) that hosts maps for all the Reserves nationwide.

Once all the Reserves have completed these habitat maps, the goal is to have a shared common language. That way, despite regional differences, these maps will provide a way to have a thorough inventory system and be a valuable tool in terms of calculating and tracking total acres protected nationwide. Our aim is to have our data posted on this site by January 2011. Currently there are other maps and data available about Great Bay.

Professional Development



The New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan is continuing with their Habitat Brochure series and recently printed four new brochures. Pictures and text explain how to identify habitat types, describe the major threats to the health of those habitats, and offer information about wildlife species that depend on each habitat. The brochures also provide specific recommendations for landowners interested in helping protect and conserve the wildlife that depend on each critical habitat type.

The brochures are produced by UNH Cooperative Extension with support from the [Sustainable Forestry Initiative](#), [N.H. Fish & Game Department](#), the [NH Natural Heritage Bureau](#), and private contributions by [NH Coverts Project](#) volunteers.



Looking for something fun to do this fall? Look to the skies and visit the Pack Monadnock Migration Observatory

Located in [Miller State Park](#) in Peterborough, this observatory is open and staffed every day from September 1 to October 31. Everyone is welcome to visit and an Audubon biologist is available to answer questions and help visitors view and identify migrating raptors.

Cool Crisp Nights

After so many hot sticky nights this summer, here's to a few cooler evenings that make sleeping easier. Hope you enjoy long walks and bowls of warm apple crisp.

