



Summer 2022

[www.gehwa.org](http://www.gehwa.org)

Issue 75

## Ghost Crab Pot Recovery on Wild and Scenic Rivers

By Fred Akers and Brooke Handley

While a bit unusual, there are several Wild and Scenic Rivers that are components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System that include tidal estuaries. One of these is the Great Egg Harbor River National Park and Scenic and Recreational River in New Jersey, which is also a Partnership Wild and Scenic River. <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1912/partnership-wild-and-scenic-rivers.htm>

Typically, Outstanding Resource Values in tidal systems revolve around scenic beauty and recreation, which includes boating and fishing. One popular fishery is blue crabs, *Callinectes sapidus*, which means “beautiful savory swimmer”. As both predator and prey, blue crabs are a keystone species



in the marine food web. Juvenile and adult blue crabs serve as food for fish, birds and even other blue crabs. Striped bass, red drum, catfish and some sharks depend on blue crabs as part of their diet.

And people love to eat blue crabs!

Currently in NJ, No. 1 crabs - the largest, heaviest males - are worth \$40 per dozen or \$225 a bushel at the dock. No. 2's - the smaller males - are currently worth \$28 per dozen or \$135 a bushel. The high demand for blue crabs creates high value fisheries for both commercial and recreational fishermen with high levels of fishing



People love to eat blue crabs.

effort. ...continued on page 2

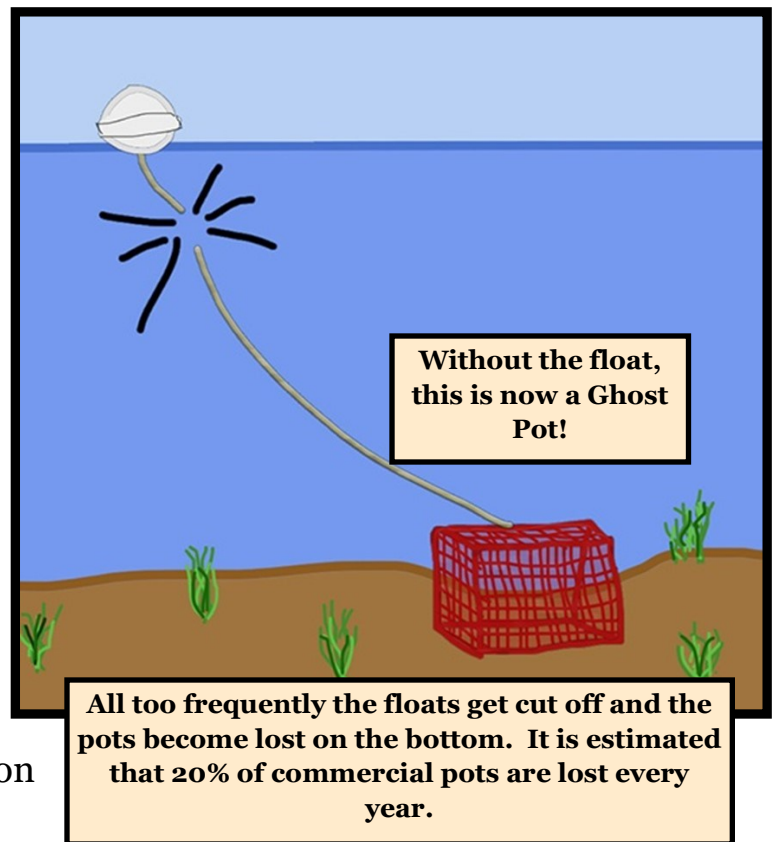
**...continued from page 1** During the crabbing season, commercial and recreational crabbers deploy hundreds of large, baited metal crab pots to the bottom of the bay. Crabs and bycatch, including Diamondback Terrapin turtles, then crawl and swim into the pots and get trapped inside. Each pot has a rope and a float attached, and finding the float is the only way to locate the trap and pull it up to harvest the crabs and release the bycatch. But if the float gets cut off, the sunken crab pot cannot be easily located, and it then becomes a “Ghost Crab Pot”.

It is estimated that 20% of these commercial style crab pots are lost or forgotten every year, which can add up to hundreds or thousands depending on the size of the area. These ghost crab pots continue to catch and kill dozens of marine species, and the killing can go on for years as trapped animals starve to death and become bait for more animals to get trapped. The “derelict” traps also become “marine debris”, which can get caught in boat motors, recreational fishing gear, and wash up onto tidal marshes during storm events.


The problem of Ghost Crab Pots has become well known in coastal areas. Here on the Great Egg the Great Egg Harbor River Council has been working with Stockton University and crabbers to find these derelict crab pots and recover as many as possible. Stockton has developed GPS grid and High-Resolution Digital Side Scan Sonar imagery, which creates location points for recovery teams to find exactly where the crab pots are located. The lost pots are then grappled up, hauled to shore, and reused or recycled.

So far in one survey day this year, Stockton has located 81 potential pots to be recovered in the Great Egg Harbor Scenic and Recreational Estuary, and they will do a second survey day soon to locate additional derelict pots for removal.

Due to the value and abundance of blue crabs and the continued use of large metal crab pots to catch them, the problem with Ghost Crab Pots is a never-ending story that needs regular attention for river protection and management. **...continued on page 3**





A large stack of yellow commercial crab traps or pots, with some red traps visible in the background. The traps are made of yellow mesh and have blue plastic latches. They are stacked in a way that shows multiple rows and columns. In the background, there are some trees and a building.

**Hundreds of commercial crab traps or pots are used every year in the Great Egg Harbor Estuary.**

[illegible]





## Please Plan on Attending GEHWA's Fall Adventure 2022

**Where:** Babcock  
Creek/Second  
Street Park and  
Lake Lenape Dam  
**What:** Canoe/Kayak  
Event

**When:** Saturday,  
September 24, 2022  
at 9:00 AM

Once again GEHWA is planning an exciting canoe/kayak event. This year we will be launching our boats near the trestle bridge embankment in Mays Landing.

We plan on exploring the Second Street Park and inventory plants. Then we will paddle to the Lake Lenape Dam. We will end our paddle at the trestle bridge. Total round trip paddle is 3 hours. Directions from Mays Landing. Turn on Central Avenue off of Route 40 and follow Central Avenue till you come to the dirt road. Turn right and head towards the trestle bridge. Park along the dirt road. Please bring your own boats, lunch, snacks and drinks.



**Please let us know if you plan on attending this EXCITING event (by email, text or cell). If you have any questions please call or text Lynn Maun @859-649-2792, or email [lynnkmaun@comcast.net](mailto:lynnkmaun@comcast.net).**

GEHWA had a very successful spring. After 2 years of very limited contact with students via Zoom, we were able to provide hands-on programs in a variety of locations.

School	Date	Location	Number of Students Educated by Each Person								Volunteers			
			Lynn		Julie		Fred		Brooke		Paul	Tom	Shane	David & Cheryl
			S	A	S	A	S	A	S	A				
Marsh Elementary School - Absecon	3/23/2022	Estell Manor Park	39	22	39	22								
Marsh Elementary School - Absecon	3/31/2022	Estell Manor Park	39	14	39	14								
Williamstown MS - Monroe Twp.	4/8/2022	School	115	7										
Williamstown MS - Monroe Twp.	4/11/2022	School	110	7										
Williamstown MS - Monroe Twp.	4/12/2022	School	111	11										
Williamstown MS - Monroe Twp.	4/13/2022	School	105	10										
Williamstown MS - Monroe Twp.	4/21/2022	School	115	7										
Williamstown MS - Monroe Twp.	4/22/2022	School	107	7										
Middle Twp. MS - Middle Twp.	4/26/2022	School	22	2					22	2				
Williamstown MS - Monroe Twp.	4/29/2022	School	47	3										
Hammonton MS - Hammonton	5/3/2022	School	94	4										
Fernwood MS - EHT	5/4/2022	Corson's Inlet	28	2			28	2	28	2	x			
Fernwood MS - EHT	5/5/2022	Corson's Inlet	28	3	28	3	28	3	28	3	x			
Fernwood MS - EHT	5/11/2022	Corson's Inlet	27	3			27	3	27	3				
Fernwood MS - EHT	5/12/2022	Corson's Inlet	31	2	31	2	31	2	31	2			x	
Fernwood MS - EHT	5/17/2022	Corson's Inlet	29	2	29	2	29	2	29	2			x	
Fernwood MS - EHT	5/18/2022	Corson's Inlet	30	2	30	2	30	2	30	2		x	x	
Fernwood MS - EHT	5/19/2022	Corson's Inlet	26	2	26	2	26	2	26	2	x		x	
Cleary ES - Buena Vista Twp.	5/20/2022	Estell Manor Park	99	62	99	62								
Fernwood MS - EHT	5/23/2022	Corson's Inlet	32	4	32	4	32	4	32	4	x			
Fernwood MS - EHT	5/25/2022	Corson's Inlet	31	4			31	4	31	4	x			
S. Main Street School - Pleasantville	5/26/2022	Estell Manor Park	65	11	65	11								
Fernwood MS - EHT	5/26/2022	Corson's Inlet					30	5	30	5				
Jordan Road School - Somers Point	6/1/2022	Kennedy Park	62	11			62	11	62	11				
Cleary ES - Buena Vista Twp.	6/2/2022	Estell Manor Park	85	50	85	50								
Fernwood MS - EHT	6/2/2022	Corson's Inlet					30	5	30	5				x
Cleary ES - Buena Vista Twp.	6/6/2022	Estell Manor Park	91	43	91	43								
Middle Twp. MS - Middle Twp.	6/8/2022	Corson's Inlet	31	5	31	5	31	5	31	5				x
Jordan Road School - Somers Point	6/10/2022	Kennedy Park	74	7	74	7	74	7	74	7				x
<b>Total Students</b>			<b>1673</b>		<b>699</b>		<b>489</b>		<b>511</b>			<b>3372</b>		
<b>Total Adults</b>				<b>307</b>		<b>229</b>		<b>57</b>		<b>59</b>		<b>652</b>		
Special Guest's at Corson's Inlet														
Turtle Lady		Loretta the Turtle Lady - Diamondback Terrapin Rescue												
NJ Fish and Wildlife		Endangered Shorebird Protection												

## Calendar of GEHWA and GEHRC Meetings 2022

(Check out our calendar at [www.gehwa.org](http://www.gehwa.org) for additional information about upcoming events)

*Meetings held at the Warren Fox Nature Center in Estell Manor will be hybrid.*

*You can attend in-person or via Zoom. Meetings will begin at 6:30 PM.*

**Saturday, September 24, 2022** GEHWA— Annual Canoe/Kayak event on or near the Great Egg Harbor River

**Wednesday, October 19, 2022** - Great Egg Harbor NS & R River Council Meeting

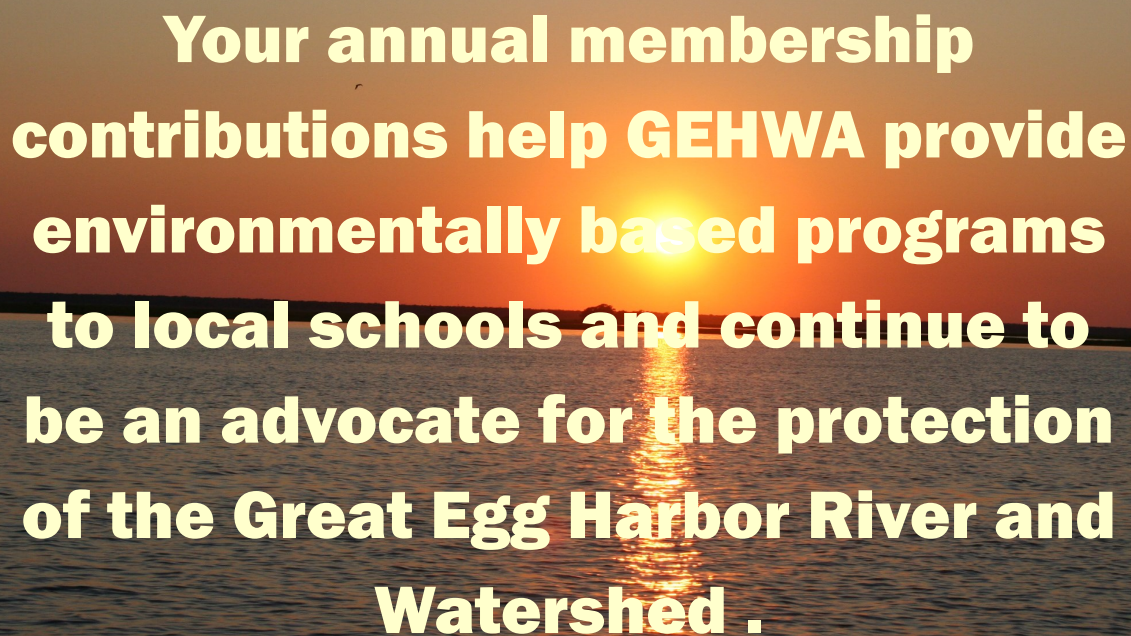
**Tuesday, November 22, 2022** - GEHWA Member Meeting— Program to be announced.

**Wednesday, December 21, 2022** - Great Egg Harbor NS & R River Council Annual Holiday Meeting

*Please plan on attending these events.*

*(If you are interested in attending a meeting being held via Zoom please contact Lynn Maun @ [lynnkmaun@comcast.net](mailto:lynnkmaun@comcast.net))*





**Your annual membership  
contributions help GEHWA provide  
environmentally based programs  
to local schools and continue to  
be an advocate for the protection  
of the Great Egg Harbor River and  
Watershed .**

### **GEHWA Membership Information**

Your membership supports our mission and ensures our survival as a non-profit advocate, as we work to protect and preserve the Great Egg Harbor River and Watershed throughout the year. Your support is needed now more than ever. Without you, we could not exist. Thank you for your support!

Name/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **Yes, I would like to receive notices by Email.**

**Annual Membership:** Individual: \$10; Family: \$15; Supporting: \$35; Patron: \$50; Corporate: \$100

**Please mail this form along with your check to:** Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association,  
Membership P.O. Box 109, Newtonville, NJ 08346

## ***The Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association's Environmental Programs are FREE***

We offer our environmentally focused programs **free** of charge to augment existing school curriculum. A school's environmental programs are often threatened when faced with annual budget cuts. If you are a parent, and/or an educator, and feel our programs would enhance the environmental education that your child/student is receiving, please contact the appropriate individual in your school and request that they take advantage of the Great Egg



**St. Vincent DePaul student puppet show**

Harbor Watershed Association's **free** programs. If you would like additional information please contact Lynn Maun, Education Outreach Coordinator at 856-649-2792 or [lynnkmaun@comcast.net](mailto:lynnkmaun@comcast.net)

**REMEMBER our environmentally focused  
programs are FREE!**



**Student holding a  
Dragonfly Nymph**



**Students from Alder Avenue School  
searching for macroinvertebrates**

### **Contact Information**

#### **Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association**

Julie Akers, President (856) 697-6114

Fred Akers, Administrator (856) 697-6114

P.O. Box 109, Newtonville, NJ 08346

Email: [fred\\_akers@gehwa.org](mailto:fred_akers@gehwa.org)

Web Site: [www.gehwa.org](http://www.gehwa.org)

Brooke Handley, Asst. Admin. (609) 602-0334

Email: [bhandley@gehwa.org](mailto:bhandley@gehwa.org)

Lynn Maun, Coordinator (856) 649-2792

Email: [lynnkmaun@comcast.net](mailto:lynnkmaun@comcast.net)

#### **National Park Service**

Paul Kenney (215) 597-5823; [Paul\\_Kenney@nps.gov](mailto:Paul_Kenney@nps.gov)

**NJ DEP Hotline** 1-877 WARN DEP

#### **NJ DEP Watershed Management Office**

(609) 777-0580

#### **Atlantic County Department of Planning**

(609) 645-5898

#### **US Army Corps of Engineers (215) 656-6725**

#### **NJ DEP Regulatory Office for Atlantic County**

(609) 292-8292

#### **NJ DEP Enforcement Officer (732) 255-0787**

#### **Pinelands Commission**

(609) 894-7300

**To report an environmental incident impacting  
NJ, call the Toll-Free 24—Hour Hotline  
1-877WARNDEP, 1-877-927-6337**

**If you should see debris or shoaling while  
traversing on New Jersey waters please call:  
1-877- WARNDEP (1-877-927-6337)**





Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association  
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