



The Pathfinder

Spring 2024

Peepers -The Song of Spring

By Tim Corwin

As you wander through the woods in early spring, your ears may be treated to a mysterious and beautiful high pitch chirping that sounds almost, but not quite, like a flock of birds. Then, as you near a wetland or vernal pond,



the forest suddenly goes silent. How can this be? You are being treated to the chorus of *Pseudocris crucifer*, a common tree frog, also known as peepers.

Burrowed into the mud and detritus of our ponds and wetlands during the winter, the tiny one-inch-long frogs emerge at the first sign of spring. Climbing into the trees, in search of the ants, flies and spiders on which they feed, the males begin their mating call consisting of a high pitched “chirp, chirp, chirp” at a frequency of 15 to 25 times per minute. As many of the males join in,

the building crescendo becomes quite cacophonous. The mating calls will often continue into the wee hours of the night. The females will choose the males based on the volume and frequency of their tone. Interestingly, not all of the males join in the chorus. Some of the older less vocal males will position themselves such that they are able to intercept the females as they approach the more boisterous competition. The females lay their eggs in clutches of 900 to 1000, often concealed under vegetation or debris at the edge of the pond. After hatching, the larval stage lasts for two or three months before the tadpoles emerge from the water as adult frogs.

As we well know, spring weather can be fickle and sometimes the temperature will turn icy cold again after the little frogs emerge. Not to worry. Tree frogs are a very hardy bunch and actually have a type of antifreeze in their blood allowing the adult to survive as long as three days in a completely frozen state. Tree frogs live about three years and rarely venture far from the pond or wetland in which they were hatched.



Experts at camouflage, the peepers are usually heard, but not seen. This affords the species safety from virtually all predators. The most serious danger the peepers face is damage to the wetlands from nearby development. This is yet another reason why it is so important to maintain our wetlands in a pristine state.

Southampton Trails Preservation Society is a nonprofit volunteer organization whose purpose is to advocate for and assist in the development of nature and recreational trails, advance the preservation of natural open space and encourage public use in the Town of Southampton.

STPS leads free hikes throughout the Town of Southampton every Saturday and Sunday all year long.

STPS originated and annually participates in The Great East End Cleanup and organizes community activities on National Trails Day (in June) and South Fork Trails Day weekend (in October).

STPS also includes Horses on Trails (HOT) which encourages recreational horseback trail riding.

Rooting Out Trouble

The Growing Menace of Invasive Plants in Southampton’s Backyard

By Kate Rummel & Chris Cole

At first glance, the trails of Southampton Town appear lush and pristine, but a closer look reveals a growing threat hiding in plain sight: invasive plants.

To shed some light on this flora foe, let us start with the basics. Invasive plants are plants that are not native to our ecosystem. They cause economic and environmental harm. These are sometimes plants native to other regions of the United States but are

They also have traits that cause them to drastically alter our natural areas and wreak havoc on our environment.

Some invasives monopolize vital resources, starving native plants of sunlight, water, and nutrients. Others can change the chemistry of the soil, preventing other plants from growing. As invasives continue to spread, our natural areas will become devoid of native vegetation, devoid of vital food and habitat for our native insects.



Cat Briar

Great resources for native plants are KMS Native Plants, Long Island Native Plant Initiative (LINPI), and Rewild Long Island. An informative site is www.gardenforwildlife.com.

Also, volunteer! Many local organizations host invasive species removals. If you are interested in cleaning up the trails, contact the Southampton Trails Preservation Society for more information. And, of course, follow this column for more information on the fight against invasives.

But hope is not lost! There are simple things you can do to affect change in our natural areas. Remove invasives from your own property. Many invasives found in our natural areas escaped from residential landscapes. Apps

for plant identification: iNaturalist, PictureThis, and PlantSnap, or the website www.iNaturalist.com.



Mile-a-Minute Vine

more commonly from other countries.

Conversely, native plants are species that evolved with the local environment over thousands of years. Because of this, they are fundamental to a healthy ecosystem, providing essential food and habitat for native wildlife. Native plants have also adapted to the climate and conditions of the area and are able to provide eco-services, like erosion control and flood management, that we benefit from.

With few to no ecological barriers to keep them in check, invasive plants can spread prolifically.

Southampton Town Geographic Information Division, digital trail map: <https://gis.southamptontownny.gov/infocenter/>



This web address or QR code takes you to the town of Southampton Info Center. Click the “trail” drop downs on the side to turn on the trail layers. With some devices you can also press the ☀ button to show your current location on the map.

Large paper trail maps are available at the Southampton Town Hall clerk’s office.

"Trails on the Water"

By Helen A. Horton

Early spring is the best time to prepare for paddling on East End. Below are some helpful suggestions for being fully ready.

Gear:

Minimum gear - properly fitting life jacket, paddle.
Additional gear - sponge, pump, spare paddle, paddle float.

Attire:

Best is synthetic fabric; never cotton, when it gets wet, it stays wet. White long-sleeved shirt, stretch leggings, and a hat with strap.
Light gloves with paddle palm and fingers to help prevent blisters.

Tips, Seasoned paddlers also suggest:

Sunglasses with a strap– sunny days can affect the cornea. Even on cloudy days, the light reflects from the water.
A handkerchief is handy for wiping glasses.

New York State law requires a whistle attached to your life jacket.

Have your ID with name, phone, medical insurance cards in secure, dry life jacket pocket
Consider a VHF (Very high frequency) radio attached to your life jacket. In case of an emergency, it gives contact to the Coast Guard.

**First, be safe on the water.
Then, of course, enjoy!**



STPS website: www.southamptontrails.org

- Monthly Hike Schedule
- Descriptions of favorite hikes
- Hike map shortcuts
- Horses on trails
- Hiking Tips
- More



STPS Board of Directors

- Mark Potter** –*Co President*
- Jennifer Keller** - *Co President*
- Marilyn Kirkbright** – *Vice President*
- Dai Dayton** – *Secretary, VP/ Event Planning & Scheduling*
- Tim Ferguson** – *Treasurer*
- Debbie Neuman & Valerie Frederick** – *VP/ Horses on Trails (HOT)*
- Vince Scerbinski** – *VP/ Membership*
- Tim Corwin** – *VP Trail Planning and Maintenance*
- Chip Dineen** - *VP Community Relations, Communications, and Education*
- Liz Karpin, Howard Reisman, and Eric Woodward** – *Board Members at large*

The Pathfinder

YES, I/We would like to be a member of the Southampton Trails Preservation Society and want S.T.P.S. to continue to lead hikes; plan monthly hiking schedules; newsletter; cut, blaze and maintain trails; relocate signage and maps; educate the public about recreational accessibility and usage; and work with government officials and other organizations to protect our open space.

Go online southamptontrails.org to pay membership directly, or send a check for annual membership dues,

Southampton Trails Preservation Society
P. O. Box 1171, Bridgehampton, NY 11932

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Phone e-mail. Date.

I am interested in: Cutting and Maintaining Trails; Helping with Fundraising; Leading Hikes; Horses on Trails (HOT); Helping with Newsletter; Helping with Mailings; Other

Individual:
___ Annual \$20
___ 3 Year \$50
___ Lifetime \$250

Household/Family:
___ Annual \$35
___ 3 year \$95
___ Lifetime \$450

___ New member, or
___ Renewal

Wanted — Trail maintenance volunteers – call Tim at 631-204-7821

Wanted -- Trail hike leaders – call Dai at 631-745-0689



Southampton Trails Preservation Society
P. O. Box 1171
Bridgehampton, NY 11932

