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## 2005 Exeter River Alewife Festival

Exeter River Local Advisory Committee

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# 2005 Exeter River Alewife Festival

A Final Report to  
The New Hampshire Estuaries Project

Submitted by the  
Exeter River Local Advisory Committee  
c/o 156 Water Street  
Exeter, NH 03833

June 21, 2005



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# 2005 Exeter River Alewife Festival

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## **2005 Exeter River Alewife Festival**

### **Executive Summary**

On June 4, 2005, the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee (ERLAC) held the 5th Annual Exeter River Alewife Festival along the banks of the Squamscott River in downtown Exeter. Over three dozen organizations exhibited at the Festival and event organizers estimate approximately 600 people, including many children, attended the event. The purpose of the Festival was to increase awareness of the Exeter River watershed and the role it plays in the Great Bay ecosystem, as well as its role in providing drinking water, wildlife habitat, and scenic, historic and recreational resources for residents in the ten watershed towns. Funding provided by the New Hampshire Estuaries Project enabled ERLAC to print posters, banners, and newspaper advertisements announcing the event, and update the Committee's brochure.

## **Introduction**

On June 4, 2005, the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee (ERLAC) held the 5th Annual Exeter River Alewife Festival along the banks of the Squamscott River in downtown Exeter. Over three dozen organizations exhibited at the Festival and event organizers estimate approximately 600 people, including many children, attended the event.

## **Project Goals**

The goal of the Annual Exeter River Alewife Festival is to increase awareness of the Exeter River watershed and the role it plays in the Great Bay ecosystem, as well as its role in providing drinking water, wildlife habitat, and scenic, historic and recreational resources for residents in the ten watershed towns. These communities are some of the fastest growing in New Hampshire and the increasing population is threatening natural resources in the region.

## **Activities**

The Festival Planning Committee, comprised of volunteers from ERLAC, watershed Conservation Commissions and historical associations, and representatives from the Seacoast Artists Association, met eight times during the contract period to establish a list of Festival participants, set the schedule of events, and work with a graphic artist to prepare publicity materials. In addition, ERLAC members researched and wrote articles to submit to area newspapers and town newsletters promoting ERLAC and committee activities such as the Festival and workshops on vernal pools and wildlife habitat. Finally, ERLAC updated and reprinted the Committee's color brochure for distribution at the Festival, future ERLAC events, and watershed libraries and town halls.

## **Results**

The 2005 Exeter River Alewife Festival was an enormous success for ERLAC, with dozens of exhibitors and estimates of 600 attendees. Attendees could receive information specifically related to the NHEP Management Plan, including; options for voluntary land protection, the importance of protecting shoreland buffers from development, the relationship between the Exeter River and the Great Bay, tips on septic system maintenance, identification of storm drains and the role drains play in protection of water quality and fisheries habitat.

Feedback from Festival exhibitors and attendees was very positive and will be used by ERLAC to develop additional outreach programs and plan the next Festival. ERLAC has received several inquiries from watershed residents interested in learning more about the Committee specifically and the watershed in general. Four new members have joined ERLAC since the Festival.

ERLAC had great success this year with securing press coverage for the event, with several articles appearing before and after the Festival. A recommendation made in the final report to the NH Estuaries Project last year was to encourage the press to interview the recipient of the annual Exeter River Steward Award.

The Exeter News Letter did a wonderful article on this year's recipient, Joanna Pellerin, a copy of which is attached to this report.

Another recommendation made after the 2004 Festival was also completed successfully, which was to invite Conservation Commissions, local advisory committees from other coastal rivers, and open space groups to participate in the event. This year, the Oyster River Watershed Association, Lamprey River Advisory Committee, Exeter Open Space Committee, and Sandown Conservation Commission took up ERLAC's invitation and exhibited at the event.

### **Conclusion**

ERLAC will continue to host the Annual Exeter River Alewife Festival as part of an on-going effort to educate residents about the need to protect water quality and quantity in the watershed. The partnerships ERLAC has created with various agencies and organization have strengthened the Committee's ability to be an advocate for the river at the local and regional level.

### **Recommendations**

ERLAC and the Festival Planning Committee met shortly after the event to review the day and make recommendations for the next Festival and other outreach projects. The following recommendations are a result of this meeting:

- Provide newspaper reporters with draft articles which they can use when writing about the event;
- Host a backyard wildlife habitat event in the fall, at the request of Festival attendees;
- Invite NH Fish and Game to staff a table at the Festival, in addition to the two tours of the fish ladder, so people can get answers to specific fisheries questions.



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## Kayak, canoe race scheduled for June 4

EXETER - The 3rd annual Exeter Canoe and Kayak Race will be held Saturday, June 4, at noon at Swasey Parkway.

Racing and recreation canoes and recreation and sea kayaks will compete in men, women, and coed classes over the 5-mile course on the Squamscott River in downtown Exeter.

The race is part of the annual Exeter River Alewife Festival set at the same location.

The fee is \$12 per paddler. Race T-shirts are free for anyone registering before May 25.

Call 778-0885 to pre-register or for information.

Racers may also apply beginning at 10:30 a.m. on the day of the race.

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### Catch the Alewife Festival June 4

EXETER - Join the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee for the annual Alewife Festival on Saturday, June 4, at Swasey Parkway from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Rain date will be June 5.)

Dozens of participants include local museums, artists, writers, boatbuilders and many public and private environmental groups.

There will be activities for children, hot and cold food, and live music performed all day by The Other Guys.

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## Pellerin to receive river-steward award

By Johanna Maranto  
[newsletter@seacoastonline.com](mailto:newsletter@seacoastonline.com)

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EXETER - Joanna (Jodi) Pellerin, president of the Rockingham Land Trust, will receive the 2005 Exeter River Steward Award from the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee at its fifth annual Exeter River Alewife Festival on Saturday, June 4, at Swasey Parkway (see separate story).

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"If you had told me when I was a kid that I would ever eat a fish caught in the Squamscott, I would have thought you were crazy," said Pellerin, who was born in Exeter and has lived there most of her life.

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Yet Pellerin, who said she was brought up on smelt, is now able to enjoy fish from the river and calls such a dinner an example of the environmental progress that has been made since the late 1940s.

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"Back then, the Squamscott was a place to stay away from. It stank, and was filled with dyes from the mills and sewage dumped from along Water Street," Pellerin said.

Pellerin's active involvement in environmental efforts dates back to the late 1970s when she joined the Exeter Conservation Commission.

"I knew things were growing and changing rapidly, that we were losing a lot of open land," said Pellerin. "I had played at Dearborn Brook by the hour when I was growing up. I began to see these places threatened and denigrated."

A development boom in the 1980s increased Pellerin's awareness, along with that of others in the state, of the need to preserve open space and protect water resources. In addition, said Pellerin, "We realized water resources do not stick to political boundaries."

Through the Rockingham Land Trust, a nonprofit group dedicated to permanently protecting open spaces, wildlife habitats and water resources in the 39 communities of greater Rockingham County, and through the Exeter River Association, Pellerin said that efforts focused in the late '80s and early '90s on the Exeter River enabled it to be placed on the state's protected rivers list.

Pellerin said she believes there has been an increase in awareness and willingness to take positive action on the environment in recent years.

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"Twenty years ago, all across the country, there were things that we were aware of, but it was like preaching to the choir," Pellerin said.

Now, Pellerin said, she believes most people are both aware and concerned about environmental issues, if sometimes at a loss about what to do. Pellerin credits the schools with some of this increase in environmental awareness.



Don Clement, chairman of the Exeter Conservation Commission, said that during the 10 years he has served on the commission, Pellerin has been his mentor.

"I have learned and continue to learn from Jodi. She is devoted to protecting all natural resources. Her work is tireless, her insight unbelievable. She is a protector of the environment, a fighter."

Theresa Walker of the Rockingham Planning Commission said that Pellerin, who was a founding member of ERLAC, has dedicated thousands and thousands of volunteer hours to environmental causes.

Walker added, "Jodi is a true advocate for the protection of nature in the

watershed. Many of us rely on her historical knowledge and understanding of the ecosystem. It is so common to be at a meeting and when a question comes up someone will say, 'Call Jodi'."

Clement, who has been in town for 26 years, calls himself a newcomer. He said, "I've come to appreciate people like Jodi, who were born and raised here. Her devotion to the town and the area is truly love."

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Mike White of Exeter fishes for striped bass during last year's Exeter River Alewife Festival in Exeter.  
 File photo

## Swimming with the fishes

By Steve Craig  
 currents@seacoastonline.com

### Complete Living Index

They're back - it's hoped. Whether the guests of honor return in abundance or not, the fifth annual Exeter River Alewife Festival will be a go this Saturday, June 4, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., with most of the activity centered on Swasey Parkway.

The festival is sponsored by the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee (ERLAC), a group dedicated to preserving the watershed along the meandering 33-mile river that springs from the ground in Chester and works its way to the tidal flow of the Squamscott.

"Yes, our people have called the alewife's people and they are coming up the river," joked Theresa Walker, ERLAC spokeswoman. "They have started their migration. One of the challenges we have is the low number of fish making it up."

The herring-like alewife is an anadromous fish, meaning it migrates from ocean to river to spawn. The alewife is doing relatively well along the Atlantic Seaboard but for some reason its numbers have been down the past two years in the Exeter River.

Longtime conservationist Joanna "Jody" Pellerin noted that New Hampshire Fish & Game Department is doing some preliminary exploration of what is keeping the alewife from the Exeter River but "everything is just in the questioning stage," she said.

One of the highlights of the Alewife Festival is the opportunity to visit the New Hampshire Fish & Game Fish Ladder, next to the Dam View Restaurant on Water Street. Tours will be held at 10 a.m. and again at 2 p.m.

"Hopefully some alewives will be in the ladder," said Donald Clement, chairman of ERLAC, as well as chairman of the Exeter Conservation Commission. "They'll occasionally bring up a chad, an alewife, the perennial crowd-pleaser the notorious lamprey eel, or even a trout. It becomes an integral part of the event."

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The third annual Canoe and Kayak Race will be held with registration at 10:30 a.m., and start at noon. The race is a five-mile down-and-back course that starts at the Exeter Town Landing adjacent to Swasey Parkway. A recreational race, it drew 45 entries a year ago. There is also a kayak raffle.

There will be a large array of exhibitors on hand, including organizations like the American Independence Museum, Exeter Center for Creative Arts, Exeter Historical Society, Sandy Point Discovery Center, Seacoast Arts Association and numerous conservation-based and land trust organizations. Artists David Carroll, Laurette Carroll and author Jack Noon are also participants.

At 12:30 p.m., Pellerin will be honored as this year's recipient of the Exeter River Steward Award. A founding member and former chairwoman of ERLAC, Pellerin is being tabbed for her devoted service to conservation causes for more than 25 years.

The New Hampshire Audubon Society will be presenting a live animal program called "Critters from the Watershed," at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Clement said he did not know what "critters" would be on hand but said he was pretty sure there would be no black bear. That's right, black bears are known to inhabit the watershed area, a diverse range that encompasses 10 municipalities.

Gaining and disseminating this type of knowledge about the river, its extended watershed and the creatures that live in and around the river is what ERLAC is all about.

The advisory committee grew from the efforts of former groups of people, including the likes of Pellerin and Clement, from watershed communities.

They had worked successfully to enroll the Exeter River in the New Hampshire River Management and Protection Program (RMPP) in 1995. The program was established in 1988 to protect designated rivers' natural and cultural resources. The N.H. Department of Environmental Services is the administrative agency.

The RMPP for the Exeter River Corridor outlined four priorities: Water Quantity and Quality (the river is Exeter's chief water source), Wildlife Habitats and Natural Communities (the watershed is home to animals from cottontail rabbit to black bear and 17 aquatic species), Scenic, Recreation and Historic Resources, and Education and Outreach.

In an effort to work toward those goals, ERLAC was formed in 1996. The Exeter River has been meeting human demands since before European settlement. The falls in Brentwood are known to have been a favorite fishing site of Native Americans and were spotted by early settlers for their potential use as a power source. But human explosion has greatly changed the river's surroundings. In 1960, according to census reports, roughly 98,000 people lived in the 67,700 acres that constitute the watershed.

Pellerin, 66, remembers when she was a young girl around 12 that the local textile mills were major polluters, as well as the sewage waste from the tenement housing along the river that housed the mill workers.

"Crossing the great bridge when entering downtown Exeter, at low tide, in the summer, the stench was incredible," Pellerin said. "Below the factory you would see the river turn colors based on whatever the color they were dying that day. It's amazing how far we've come."

But with current population figures roughly triple the 1960 figure - and expected to exceed 400,000 by 2020 - there will always be a need for vigilance and monitoring.

Pellerin said, "it wasn't so long ago that you could see lobstermen standing on String Bridge and netting the alewives to bait their lobster pots." While the obvious pollution sources from years past are now contained, there are still pollution problems.

"The greatest problem now is the non-point pollution that comes with storm water," Pellerin said. "Where we have more and more paving and rooftops, there's more and more rainwater washing off."

Bringing that type of issue into the common consciousness is one goal of the Alewife Festival.

"ERLAC itself doesn't preach, per se. The exhibitors at the event do a lot of the education," Walker said.

The other goal is simpler, kind of like the natural thrill of seeing an alewife run up a river its forebears have traversed for centuries.

"It's a festival at a beautiful venue," Clement said. "Our first goal from the outset was to have a fun day and that hasn't changed."

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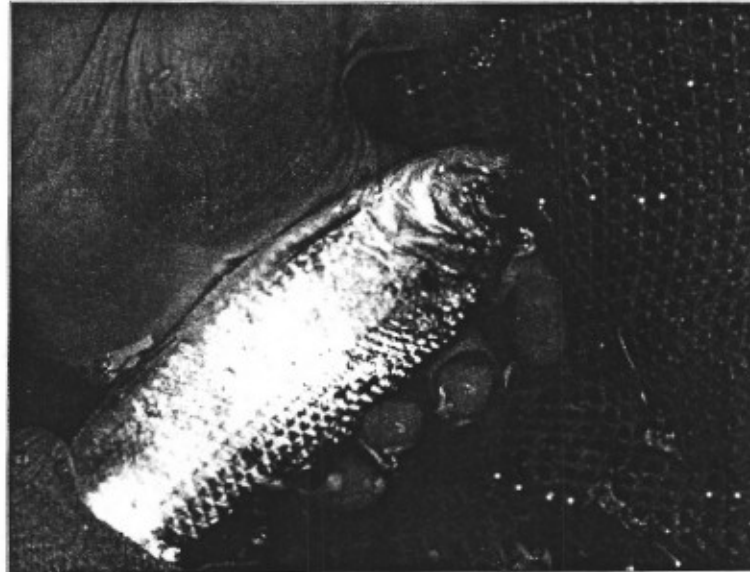
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The alewife lives in deep water and breeds in shallow riverbeds.  
 Courtesy photo

## Alewife a fish, not a barmaid

By Steve Craig  
 currents@seacoastonline.com

[Complete Living Index](#)

EXETER - Alewife. The name suggests a drunkard's spouse or perhaps a Colonial barmaid.

Ah, but neither is correct. As zoologists, ecologists and amateur historians know, it is a small herring-like fish. Like its more celebrated fellow anadromous friend the salmon, it lives most of its life in the scary depths of the ocean, banding together in great schools but is bred and born and intrinsically returned to the shallow riverbeds. Its annual propagation migration makes the alewife a creature of near mythical importance, one worthy of being the namesake of the fifth annual Exeter River Alewife Festival, set for June 4 (10 a.m.-2 p.m.).

"Historically the town of Exeter's had an alewife on its seal," said Donald Clement, chairman of the Exeter River Local Advisory Commission (ERLAC), the festival's organizing group. "Plus there's a story, I don't know if it's true, sort of an urban legend, that during Colonial times (there was) one very bad winter, poor crops, and it was the migration of the spring alewives that saved the town. The colonists were able to catch and net enough alewives to keep them from starving."

Noting the bony nature of the fish and its more common use as a bait fish, Clement doubts the veracity - or at least totality - of the story.

Still, the alewife figured prominently in Colonial life.

Technically called *Alosa pseudoharengus*, the fish still ranges from Newfoundland to northern South Carolina, returning to rivers, streams and ponds - usually in the early spring - to spawn. Some particularly adventurous travelers made it all the way to the Great Lakes at least as early as 1954, where they have become year-round residents. But that's a story for a different region.

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The alewife and its very similar cousin the blueback herring are known collectively as river herring. Upon their return to the rivers, an adult female is capable of distributing more than 480,000 eggs in a season. Once the deposits (eggs and sperm) are sprayed into the current and left to nature's way, the alewife turns tail and sprints back to the ocean where it will spend most of the year in large schools at 150 feet or more in depth.

Alewife adults average less than 12 inches in length and weigh around a half pound, though local folk say the average length in the Exeter is more like 6 inches.

The alewife has long been used commercially, for corn cultivation way back in the early 1700s, and more consistently as baitfish (think the thriving cod business of centuries past).

As the great schools would return annually, they were heavily fished and counted upon as a food source. In fact early New England towns routinely passed laws to forbid mill operators from entirely damming a river, thus closing off the fish from its breeding ground. As one early Massachusetts writer put it, the alewife seemed, "to be a sort of fish appropriated by Divine Providence to Americans and most plentifully afforded to them so that remote towns as far as Dunstable (as we hear) have barreld y'm up and preserved them all winter for their relieve."  
(Source: A Documentary History of the Alewife in Maine and New England, [www.kennebecriver.org](http://www.kennebecriver.org).)

Maybe Exeter's tale of the alewife isn't a fish story after all.



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Dover, New Hampshire

Sunday, June 5, 2005

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Sunday, June 5, 2005

## Alewife Fest isn't only about fish

By **MICHAEL GOOT**  
Portsmouth Bureau Chief  
[mgoot@fosters.com](mailto:mgoot@fosters.com)

EXETER — Though it is called the Alewife Festival, there was also plenty of opportunity to learn about snakes, eels and the Exeter River in general at Saturday's festival.

This was the fifth year for the event, which is held at Swasey Parkway, and organized by the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee.

"It's to provide a general awareness of so many different aspects of the river," said Donald Clement, chairman of the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee.

This includes both the watershed, historical and artistic aspects of Exeter. The second reason is to provide a fun time in the spring. "It's a Saturday all-purpose family day," he said.

The event included live music by The Other Guys. There were tours of the state Fish and Game Department's fish ladder. There was also a canoe and kayak race, and a live animal program called "Critters from the Watershed."

The alewife is on the town's logo. The fish is a type of herring that spends its adult life in the Atlantic Ocean but need freshwater to spawn. The migrating process occurs for about six weeks every spring. The fish make the transition with the aid of the fish ladder that allows them to go up a series of incremental steps to get from saltwater to freshwater.

Theresa Walker of the Rockingham Planning Commission, said one question currently on everybody's mind is "why they're having such a difficult time spawning and returning to the river." The number of fish crossing over the ladder has dropped to a trickle.

"We don't know if it is water quality, water quantity, operational changes in how the dam is being operated. That's all things that are going to be studied," she said.

Olive Tardiff, a local historian and author, explained the history of the Exeter-Squamscott River, which stretches for 26 miles between



Hope Eagleson, left, of New Hampshire Fish and Game, helps Jordan Litcofsky, 3, and his sister Ashleigh, 6, learn how to cast a fishing line at the Fifth Annual Exeter River Alewife Festival on Saturday. (Mark Avery/Democrat Photo)

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Chester and Exeter.

Tardiff explained the legend of how the alewife became the town's symbol. Exeter was originally land belonging to the Squamscott tribe. The alewives always spawned in the location. When the settlers built the dams, the fish were not able to get to their spawning grounds.

"One winter, the settlers were almost starving to death," she said. However, they managed to survive by eating alewives, which are so bony that they are not usually considered an edible fish.

Matthew Smith, who opened a gallery on Water Street called The Copper Canoe about six weeks ago, is a former commercial fisherman.

Smith said the reasons why the alewife is having difficulty could be anything from overfishing to environmental problems. He said it is important that Exeter figure out how to save the fish.

Dave Kellam of the New Hampshire Estuaries Project was playing "Eel of Fortune" with a group of kids and live eels. The children spun a wheel that explained different scenarios that could happen to an eel as it makes its way up the coast.

Ten-year-old Ryan Bergeron, of Wakefield, said he enjoyed seeing the eels up close. "It was awesome," he said, adding it was "pretty slimy and slippery."

Dave Coughlin of the Audubon Society of New Hampshire, was showing off different snakes. "When they strike, it's unbelievable how fast they move. You can't get your hand out of the way fast enough," he said.

Exeter Selectman Lionel Ingram explained a new study the town is doing of its watershed area. Among some of the issues are whether the dam can withstand a 50-year flood; the level of dissolved oxygen in the water and whether that is impacting the quality of fish; how to minimize damage from coastal flooding; and the best way of getting fish upstream.

Heather Roberson brought here sons Liam, 6, and Evan, 3, to the event. They were viewing an exhibit by Barbara McMillan of Portsmouth about how pollution can run off into the river. "We're homeschoolers. This is stuff we will probably be talking about all week," she said.

Bridget Gould of Exeter brought here three sons: Colby, 7; Jacob, 6; and Luke, 3.

"It's a great opportunity to bring them down here and get a little education as well as spending some time as a family," she said.

Ed Bonner of Brentwood said the event was also an educational experience for him. "I like the opportunity to learn about the different conservation groups and find out what kind of research and science is being done in the area," he said.





**Joshua Heckman of Exeter has his potrait drawn by artist Nacy Hubble of Durham along the banks of the Exeter River on Saturday, at the Fifth Annual Exeter River Alewife Festival. (Mark Avery/Democrat Photo)**

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## Alewife Festival makes big splash

By Johanna Maranto  
 newsletter@seacoastonline.com

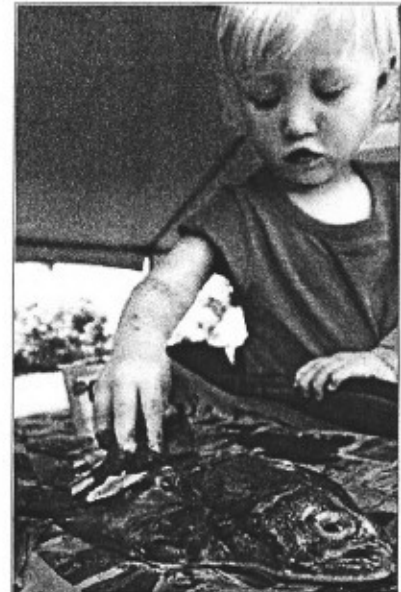
EXETER - The weather warmed last week just in time to usher in the alewife, guest of honor at the fifth annual Exeter River Alewife Festival held Saturday at Swasey Parkway.

The alewife, a river herring that runs from the ocean to the fresh water of the Exeter River each spring to spawn, is emblematic of both river ecology and the town of Exeter's historical ties to nature in the watershed. The alewife is featured on the town seal.

Heavy spring rains and unseasonably cool temperatures had delayed the annual alewife run this season. But when N.H. Fish and Game Department staffers opened the fish ladder at the Great Dam for festival attendees Saturday, the erstwhile alewife had been joined by blueback herring, rainbow trout, Lamprey eels and chubsuckers in a holding area at the top of the ladder.

Cheri Patterson, a marine biologist from Fish and Game, lectured on the annual migration and the role of the ladder as she displayed the various fish to the audience.

The four-hour festival was well-attended by families and friends who enjoyed exhibits by local artists, live-animal demonstrations by the Audubon Society, face painting and arts and crafts projects.



Dessa Needham, 1, of Stratham paints a flounder that she will then press against paper to create a relief print.  
 Photo by Jamie Cohen

Educational displays by various state environmental departments detailed river ecology and advised residents who live in the watershed area to avoid using cleaning products on their driveways, to eliminate pesticides, to minimize fertilizers and to dispose of auto fluids properly.

Hope Eagleson of the Fish and Game Department's "Let's Go Fishing" program taught fishing novices how to cast fishing lines. Eagleson, who said she loves all kinds of fishing, said she has her best luck with trout, which she smokes and turns into a paté that is prized by her family and friends. Eagleson said she would like to see more girls take up the traditionally male sport and added that fishing together is a great family activity.

Matt Russell of Sandown was one of more than 30 volunteers who made the alewife festival possible. Russell, who staffed the kayak raffle booth, also serves on Sandown's

Conservation Commission and considers the river festival valuable in raising community awareness about the river and the effects of development on the environment.

Russell said, "I'm concerned about growth in my own town and in all of Rockingham County. It's difficult to see my town decimated. I'm an

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environmentalist in my heart."

The kayak, donated by Kittery Trading Post, was won by Amy Lowell of Chester.

Exeter resident Joanna Pellerin was presented with the Exeter River Steward Award for her years of environmental activism on behalf of the river and watershed. In accepting the award, Pellerin noted that although the Squamscott had been cleaned up, more complicated problems have led the Exeter River to be placed on a list of impaired waters and remain to be solved.

The third annual Exeter Canoe and Kayak Race was held during the festival. Thirty-five paddlers raced a five-mile course along the tidal Squamscott River. The canoe team of Larry Douglas of Barrington and Scott Ricker of West Newbury, Mass., set the course record with a time of 44.23.



Alan Eno, 2, tries his best to sit still while having his portrait painted by Nancy Hubbe at the Alewife Festival at Swasey Parkway in Exeter on Saturday morning.

Photo by Jamie Cohen

First-time canoe-racing team Vivien Kuinones of Kingston and AJ Sanders of Danville, who had arrived early in the morning to help set up the festival, were satisfied just to have finished the course. Sanders, a longtime canoeer but first time racer, relaxed in the shade after the race and said, "It's back to the motorboat after this!"

#### RACE RESULTS:

Two-man racing canoe: First place, Douglas and Ricker; second place, Kirk Olsen (North Andover, Mass.) and Bill Kuklinski (Danvers, Mass.); third place, Sean Rogers (Exeter) and Paul Cole (Groveland, Mass.)

Racing/sea kayak (men): First place, Pete Schacht (Newburyport, Mass.) 47:52; second place, Greg Lowell (Chester, N.H.); third, Keith Wolcott (Chester, N.H.)

Racing/sea kayak (women): First place, Janet Tucker (Exeter, N.H.) 72:00; second place, Kim Ridley (Atkinson, N.H.); third, Cindy Dano (Raymond, N.H.)

Recreation kayak (men): First place, Baron Richardson (Chester, N.H.) 58:53; second, Travis Glazier (Dover, N.H.); third, Bob Litwinovich (Newton, N.H.)

Recreation kayak (women): First place, Amy Lowell (Chester, N.H.) 62:30; second place, Carol Thomas (Raymond, N.H.); third, Erica Parnell (Portsmouth, N.H.)

Recreation canoe: First place, Josh Weinstein (Newmarket, N.H.) and Adam Dean (Somersworth, N.H.) 60:15; second place, Dan Flammini and Jon Moore (Kensington, N.H.); third place, Dennis Keane and Sheila Keane (Raymond, N.H.)

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**Exeter Canoe and Kayak Race set**

EXETER — The third annual Exeter Canoe and Kayak Race will be held Saturday, June 4, starting at Swasey Parkway.

The race will begin at noon. The course is five miles long on the Squamscott River. The cost is \$12 per person. To register or for more information, call 778-0885. Racers can also register starting at 10:30 a.m. on the day of the race.



**JUNE 2005**

# THE FREMONT NEWSLETTER

*We're Building Community*

## MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

The Annual Memorial Day Parade is Sunday May 29, 2005 at 9:00 am. Military personnel, local civic groups, and school children are invited to march, and everyone is welcome to the services!

Come and help welcome home our many troops, show your support for military personnel, and especially to honor those brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice.

The parade leaves the Town Hall at 295 Main Street and proceeds down Main Street to the Village Cemetery, where a service is held. In case of inclement weather, services will be held at Ellis School beginning at 9:00 am. **PLEASE JOIN US!**

## OFFICE CLOSURES

All Town Offices will be closed on Monday May 30, 2005 in observance of Memorial Day. Trash collection will be one day delayed during the holiday week.

The Building Inspector's Office will be CLOSED on Monday June 20, 2005.

All Town Offices will be closed on Monday July 4, 2005 in observance of Independence Day. Trash collection will be one day delayed during the holiday week.

## BUILDING INSPECTOR OFFICE CLOSURE

The Building Inspector's Office will be CLOSED from Monday July 4 through 8. There will be limited inspection coverage by another inspector. Arrangements must be made 48 hours in advance by speaking with Meredith at 895-2226 x 17. Please schedule work prior to and after the week of closure.

During this week, no building permits will be issued, no test pits witnessed, and NO certificates of occupancy will be issued. Building Permit applications are available in the Building Inspector's Office. **PLEASE PLAN ACCORDINGLY.** Contact Thom Roy with questions at 895-2226 x 18 or at [FremontBI@comcast.net](mailto:FremontBI@comcast.net).

## EXETER RIVER ALEWIFE FESTIVAL

The 5<sup>th</sup> annual Exeter River Alewife Festival will be held on Saturday June 4, 2005 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm along Swasey Parkway in downtown Exeter. The day-long celebration of the river includes activities for kids, live music, hot food, live animals, and over 30 environmental, historic and arts organizations, all under tents spread out across the Parkway.

The events begin at 10 am with a tour of the NH Fish & Game fish ladder next to the Dam View Restaurant on Water Street. NH F&G staff will be on site to enable viewing of Alewives and other migrating fish up close. A canoe and kayak race along a five mile course on the tidal Squamscott River begins at noon, and another tour of the fish ladder takes place at 2:00 pm. The Audobon Society of NH will present two programs on wildlife in the region, at 11:00 am and 1:00 pm. For more information, contact Theresa Walker at 778-0885.

**BULKY DAY was again a great success, thanks to the many volunteers who helped! THANK YOU ALL!**

**The last day of School at Ellis is June 21<sup>st</sup>!  
Have a safe and happy summer!**

## MEMORIAL DAY GERANIUM & BAKE SALE

Fremont Cub Scout Pack 1 will hold a geranium sale on Sunday May 29<sup>th</sup> at the historic Fremont Meetinghouse. The sale will run from 9:00 am until 12 noon, before and after the Memorial Day parade and activities. The plants (in 4 1/2 inch pots) are 1 for \$6 or 3 for \$15, and will be available in many colors. Arrangements can be made for delivery of larger quantities. The Scouts will also have baked goods and beverages for sale.

## PLANT AND BOOK SALE SATURDAY JUNE 11<sup>TH</sup>

In a spirit of green gardens and active recycling, the Fremont Garden Club and the Friends of the Fremont Library are holding a grand pre-summer sale of plants and books on Saturday, June 11 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, rain or shine, at the Fremont Library, 7 Jackie Bernier Drive.

There will be a great selection of books including fiction, nonfiction, and children's books along with videos, puzzles, and posters. Prices will be fantastically low so everyone can stock up for summer reading at the beach or in a hammock. A wide variety of plants grown by local gardeners will also be available at bargain prices. Come early to get the best selection. All proceeds from the booksale will be used to continue and expand the museum passes and other library programs for Fremont residents.

If you have items to donate, leave them at the library no later than Wednesday, June 8. Textbooks, Reader's Digest books, encyclopedias, and books in poor condition cannot be accepted. If you have questions about donations, or would like to help set up or sell, call Cheryl Rowell at 895-9923 or e-mail to [rowells@localnet.com](mailto:rowells@localnet.com)

## CAMP FREMONT

Camp Fremont Summer Registrations are now being accepted!

Camp Fremont Summer Program registrations and tentative summer schedule are available at the Ellis School, Fremont Town Hall, Fremont Library, and online at [www.Fremont.nh.gov](http://www.Fremont.nh.gov). For your convenience, registrations may be filled out and dropped off with payment at the Selectmen's Office during regular office hours.

Camp Fremont's six week summer program runs 9:00-3:00, Monday through Friday from July 11 to August 19. Cost for the program is 75.00 per week which includes the price of field trips. Each camper receives a free Camp Fremont t-shirt as well. Additional children from the same family (after the first registration at \$75) are \$65.00.

This year's program includes field trips to Canobie Lake, Ordiorne, Museum of Science, Leddy Center, and more..... Theme days include, Chocomania, Mad Scientists' Lab, Grossology, Beach Party, Happy Holidays, and more. Camper presentations include Lip Sync, Skitsophrenia, Kooky Karnival, and a Bike Rodeo. Additionally, days will be packed with group games, Spanish and computer enrichment programs, and community service activities. Whew! Any questions give call or email to Robin Lee, 490.4549, [rschew@yahoo.com](mailto:rschew@yahoo.com) Hope to see you this summer!!!!

We are also looking for local residents to come share some of their hobbies, talents, and careers with the communities' children. If you wish to share a part of your world with our campers, give Robin Lee a call at 490-4549. We would love to have you!

## In search of the rapidly vanishing alewife

Long ago I had a fishing pole obtained by collecting green stamps. (For those too young to know what they were, local grocers and gas stations would give you stamps based on the amount you paid — after pasting them in a book, they were redeemed for "prizes.")

All my fishing memories are bleak: Waiting forever, catching nothing; casting off an ocean pier and catching the pier; with shrimp bait, hooking an alligator in my sister's backyard pond in Florida. (I left that pole in her garage.)

About five years ago, a group of Seacoast enthusiasts was assembling a unique guide to the Piscataqua region featuring historical preservation, maritime history, and ecological stewardship. I was to author the Exeter chapters, as the Exeter and Squamscott Rivers flow into the Piscataqua and out to the Atlantic after passing through Great Bay. "Cross Grained & Wily Waters: A Guide to the Piscataqua Maritime Region" was the book and my assignment was to find out the sad story of the alewife. It's a classic tale of man versus nature, how meeting our modern needs can alter our environment, perhaps beyond reversal. I'm not a naturalist, and I protested the task claiming failed fish experience. Go meet an alewife in person, go ~~to~~ <sup>get</sup> the answer.



CAROL WALKER ATEN

### IN EXETER

I only had to capture the fish on film and not by hook. On a cloudy cool day in May there was some concern it was too cold for the alewives to be running at all. Though not the highest fish on the food chain, they do have enough brains to know it's good to make difficult breeding journeys on warm days. Alewives leave the ocean and return to spawn in the rivers of their birth — the more fish that can survive the journey, the more likely the success of future generations. In the cycle of river life the alewives eat tiny zooplankton, are in turn dined on by perch, salmon, bass, eels, bluefish, terns, eagles, ospreys, great blue herons, gulls and by people for bait.

Escorted by staff from N.H. Department of Fish and Game, I climbed onto the fish ladder that runs between the falls of the Exeter River between Great Bridge and String Bridge. Inside the concrete ladder, (which is something like a square culvert capped with a metal grating) the cold gray water up to their waists, two young men grappled with a large net designed to ensnare the fish for their regular headcount. There weren't any alewives to be seen. The very hideous lamprey eels were plentiful, however, and one proceeded to attach itself to the forearm of the rookie game warden. Lampreys are a predatory fish that feed on the body fluids of other animals, specifically blood. They find their prey by smell, sight and taste, and this one had its victim covered. After a fast lesson in eel-removal techniques, he was able to detach the "primitive eel-like freshwater or anadromous cyclostome having round sucking mouth with a rasping tongue." (So says the dictionary.)

My mission was to find an alewife, and I needed *just one* to photograph. So, we packed up the gear and drove to the Newmarket ladder on the Lamprey River. With a pair of loaned waders I was invited into the dark, eel-infested waters. Needless to say, I was really enthusiastic about getting close and personal with sucking critters. As luck would have it, the first netting caught about a dozen alewives, whose silver scales glistened as they wriggled. Mission accomplished.

The Alewife Festival, started around the same time, has been a great way for the community to learn about the river and its importance. There was no way to predict when the festival began, that it would be increasing the awareness of this fragile ecosystem exactly at the time the alewife population on the Exeter River was taking a nosedive. That year there were 533 alewives counted on the Exeter River. The highest count was in 1981 with 15,626. By last spring there were 83 alewives. The experts continue to work on the reasons why they are dwindling and the strategies to return this lowly native fish to its former abundance. Now that I'm personally attached to this small, humble fish, I get angry at the sea gulls that hungrily prowl the rocks of the dam, and encourage them to go for those ugly lamprey eels instead.

*Carol Walker Aten is an Exeter resident. In Exeter is a column dedicated to the politics, cultural heartbeat, social happenings, historic context and general intrigues of the people of Exeter. She may be reached at [inexeter@comcast.net](mailto:inexeter@comcast.net)*

## COAST

# Exeter River Alewife Festival this Saturday

By **TERRY DATE**  
Democrat Staff Writer

**NEWMARKET**—Learn about critters from the local watershed and watch a canoe and kayak race at the Exeter River Alewife Festival on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The festival, at the Swasey Parkway, celebrates the annual

migration of alewives and other fish from saltwater to freshwater. It's sponsored by the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee. Sunday is the rain date.

More than two dozen organizations will present information and activities celebrating the wildlife, history and art of the Exeter River.

Family activities include mu-

sic by the band The Other Guys, tours of the NH Fish and Game Ladder and two live animal presentations by NH Audubon.

The following is the schedule of events:

The Other Guys will provide music from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Tours of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Ladder, located next to the Dam View Restau-

rant, will be held at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Registration for the kayak and canoe race is at 10:30 a.m. The race starts at noon.

Critters from the Watershed, a live animal program presented by NH Audubon, takes place at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

At 12:30 p.m. the Exeter River Steward Award will be presented.

The Swasey Parkway is located by downtown Exeter.

The Exeter River Local Advisory Committee, known as ERLAC, is a citizens' group representing the 10 Exeter River watershed towns. ERLAC works to protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and scenic, recreational and historic resources through education and collaboration with

other organizations.

Festival supporters include the NH Coastal Program, NH Estuaries Project, the Timberland Company, Rockingham Planning Commission, Squamscott Press, Peter Olney, Cathy Arakelian and JoAnne Trahan.

For more information, call (603) 778-0885 or visit [www.exeter-river.org](http://www.exeter-river.org).



# SUMMER FESTIVAL GUIDE

*The complete resource to what your friends will be doing without you if you don't get off the couch this summer*

compiled by staff

**T**here are festivals aplenty here on the Seacoast, and the crowds grow every year. jazz, blues and folk to horseracing, from historical reenactments to sand-sculpting, you have your pick of warm-weather diversions. Tradition and local flavor remain the main attraction, whether you're talking chowder or alewives, but if you don't like what you have here, then it's never too late to create your own event.

## JUNE



**June - September: 1905-2005: Portsmouth Peace Treaty:** From garden parties to parades and historical reenactments, the greater Portsmouth community offers a summer-long celebration of the people, places and events associated with the 1905 treaty that concluded the Russo-Japanese war. For a full schedule and updates, visit [www.portsmouthpeacetreaty.com](http://www.portsmouthpeacetreaty.com).

**Saturday, June 4 (rain date June 5): fifth annual Exeter River Alewife Festival,** a celebration of the Exeter River featuring migrating alewives and other fish, live music, educational presentations, exhibits by local artists and boatbuilders, a canoe and kayak race, children's activities, and food. 10am-2pm. Swasey Parkway, Exeter. 603-778-0885.

**Saturday, June 4: tenth annual Great Cocheco Boat Race,** racers navigate a three-and-a-half-mile stretch of the Salmon Falls River from the Route 101 bridge in South Berwick to Henry Law Park in Dover in rowing shells, kayaks, race canoes, and recreational canoes. 11am. Register on race day, 8:30-10am; \$15 per person registration fee to race or \$30 per family of four, children under 12 free, to support Strafford Rivers Conservancy. Route 101 Bridge, South Berwick. 603-557-7561.

**Monday, June 6: Bell Center for Music and Arts concert,** free for the community. 7pm. Bell Center, Fourth Street, Dover. 603-742-2355.

**Thursday, June 9 - July 28: Summer Concerts in the Park,** Thursday evening outdoor concert series featuring bands from around New England, starting with Curt Bessette and Skamasutra. 6-9pm. Free. Swasey Parkway, Exeter. 603-778-0591, [www.exeternh.org](http://www.exeternh.org).



**Saturday, June 11: 28th annual Market Square Day,** the streets in downtown Portsmouth's Market Square close for a day of festivities including a 10K road race, live music on four stages, dance, shopping at scores of tables with local vendors and downtown merchants. 9am-5pm. Free. Market Square, Portsmouth. 603-436-3988, [www.proportsmouth.org](http://www.proportsmouth.org).

**Thursday, June 16: Summer Concerts in the Park,** Thursday evening outdoor concert series featuring band from around New England, presents Ben Shippee Band. 8pm. Free. Swasey Parkway, Exeter. 603-778-0591, [www.exeternh.org](http://www.exeternh.org).

**Friday, June 17 - Saturday, June 18: Pocket Gardens of Portsmouth,** a four-mile self-guided biking or walking tour that includes 10 private gardens and two museum garden. 5-8pm. \$17 in advance, \$20 day of to benefit South Church. 603-433-8525.

**Saturday, June 18: Somersworth International Children's Festival,** featuring multicultural and children's entertainment on four stages, a petting zoo, pony rides, crafts, exotic and traditional foods, and 250 activities and vendors. A pre-festival celebration with local bands and fireworks is held 6:30-9pm on Friday night. On Main Street and at the Noble Pines Playground, Somersworth. 603-692-5869, [www.nhfestivals.org](http://www.nhfestivals.org).

**Saturday, June 18: 21st annual WOKQ Chowder Festival,** local restaurants serve up a variety of chowders and compete for the title of Best Chowder Restaurant at the state's oldest and largest chowder festival, 11:30am until it's all gone. Suggested donation \$8 for adults; \$5 for children (\$1 off for Prescott Park members). Prescott Park Arts Festival, Marcy St., Portsmouth. 603-436-2848, [www.artfest.org](http://www.artfest.org).

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MAY 31, 2005

VOLUME 22, NO. 14

## Alewife Festival

EXETER - Come celebrate the annual migration of alewives and other fish from salt water to freshwater at the 5th Annual Exeter River Alewife Festival, sponsored by the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee. The Festival will take place from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on June 4 at Swasey Parkway in downtown Exeter. The rain date is June 5. Scheduled family activities include music by the band The Other Guys, tours of the NH Fish and Game fish ladder, and two live animal presentations by NH Audubon. Over two dozen participating organizations will have information and activities celebrating the wildlife, history and art of the Exeter River. The canoe and kayak race will begin at noon and the fifth Exeter River Steward Award will be presented at 12:30 p.m.

The Exeter River Local Advisory Committee (known as ERLAC) is a citizen's group representing the ten Exeter River watershed towns. ERLAC works to protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and scenic, recreational and historic resources through education and collaboration with other organizations. Festival supporters include the NH Coastal Program, NH Estuaries Project, the Timberland Company, Rockingham Planning Commission, Squamscott Press, Peter Olney, Cathy Arakelian and JoAnne Trahan. For more information, please call 778-0885 or visit [www.exeterriver.org](http://www.exeterriver.org).

## ★ KEEP THE DATE ★

### Alewife Festival

The annual Exeter celebration of a little fish along the Swasey Parkway celebrates the migration of the alewife from the Atlantic to the Exeter River. This year's event is June 4 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. with music, food, exhibits and kayak races. 778-0885.

### 15th annual Revolutionary War Festival

Grab your muskets! The festival this year is on Saturday, July 16 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on the grounds of the American Independence Museum and Swasey Parkway in Exeter. Take a gander at some cool re-enactments and a great tent with kids' activities. 772-2622.



The Exeter Revolutionary War Festival is a great bang for your buck (most activities are free!)

Courtesy photo.

### Strawberry Festival

The 30th annual Strawberry Festival will be held on the grounds of the Central School in South Berwick, Maine on Saturday, June 25. More than 120 juried artisans will display paintings, photographs, furniture, jewelry and loads of wonderful crafts. Stage shows, rock climbing wall, and delicious strawberry shortcake in the traditional strawberry tent. [www.southberwickstrawberryfestival.com](http://www.southberwickstrawberryfestival.com).

### Music-by-the-Sea

A series of concerts on the Seacoast Science Center lawns overlooking the sea. This year there is a large tent for rainy evenings. Tickets are \$8 per person and half price for members (sign up then and there!). Concerts begin June 30 and run for six Thursdays. Doors open at 5 p.m. and the sounds start at six. This year's line up is: June 30: Entrain, July 7: Hot Like Fire, July 14: Truffle, July

21: TBA, July 28: Jumbo Circus Peanuts, Aug. 4: The Don Campbell Band. The center is at 570 Ocean Blvd., Rye. 436-8043. [www.seacentr.org](http://www.seacentr.org)

demos galore all along Ocean Boulevard. The fair runs Sept. 9, 10, 11 with shuttle buses from key area points. [www.hamptonbeachseafoodfestival.com](http://www.hamptonbeachseafoodfestival.com).

### Stratham Fair

This is a big one, folks! The 38th annual Stratham Fair will be held from Thursday, July 28 to Sunday, July 31 in Stratham Hill Park, Route 33, Stratham. Come to the fair and experience a piece of the past right along with the present! Entertainment for all ages, 4-H activities, midway rides, arts and crafts, and of course the pig scramble, not to mention all the great fair food treats you can taste! [www.stratham-fair.com](http://www.stratham-fair.com)

Also save the date for the fifth annual Master Sand Sculpting Competition from June 17 to June 30 right on Hampton Beach, and the Children's Festival from Aug. 15 to Aug. 19. Go to [www.hamptonbeach.com](http://www.hamptonbeach.com) for information on these and other great beach events including a summer's worth of concerts in the beach bandstand and at the Hampton Casino Ballroom.

### Newmarket Heritage Festival

Dance and sing! Laugh and learn! It's the 2005 Newmarket Heritage Festival on Friday, Sept. 16 from 5 to 9:30 p.m.; Saturday, Sept. 17 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Sunday, Sept. 18 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.. Admission is \$5 for the weekend, and kids under 12 are free. Music, dance, artisan demos, crafts, kayak excursions, a model railway, international foods and much more! [www.heritage-festival.org](http://www.heritage-festival.org).

### Hampton Beach Seafood Festival

All the seafood you could dream of (and last year deep-fried Oreos) can be found at this year's Hampton Beach Seafood Festival. It's the 16th year of this great feast fest with more than 50 restaurants and crafts, three stages of entertainment and cooking

## ★ ARTS FESTIVAL ★

PRESCOTT PARK,  
From Page 11

Saturday, Aug. 13, 4 p.m.,  
The Spoo Gabbling Circus.

Sunday, Aug. 14, noon-5,  
Country Music Festival.

Wednesday, Aug. 17, 8  
p.m. Godspell in Concert.

Thursday, Aug. 18, noon,  
Kids in the Back Concert.

Saturday, Aug. 20, noon,  
Leslie Smith/Sammy the Snail.

Sunday, Aug. 21, noon,  
Brendan Carey Block Concert.

Wednesday, Aug. 24, 8

p.m. Forever Plaid, concert.

Thursday, Aug. 25, noon,  
Kids in the Back Concert.

Thursday, Aug. 25, 8 p.m.,  
Mambo Sosambro.

Friday, Aug. 26, 8 p.m.,  
Jim McDougal and the Funky Divas of Gospel.

Saturday, Aug. 27, 4 p.m.,  
Kids series, TBA.

Saturday, Aug. 27, 8 p.m.,  
The Compaq Big Band.

Sunday, Aug. 28, noon,  
Salt River Trio.

Sunday, Aug. 28, 7 p.m.,  
Middlesex Concert Band.

Saturday, Oct. 1, 11:30  
a.m. WHEB 16th annual

Chili Cook-off.

Newspaper  
Advertisement

JOIN US JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup> TO CELEBRATE THE EXETER RIVER



## FIFTH ANNUAL EXETER RIVER ALEWIFE FESTIVAL

See migrating Alewives and other fish! Meet representatives from over two dozen local and regional environmental and community organizations! Learn about the river's role in area history! Enjoy exhibits by local artists and boatbuilders! Join in kids activities and a canoe and kayak race! Enjoy hot and cold food and live music!

**SATURDAY, JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup> • 10AM – 2PM**  
**SWASEY PARKWAY IN DOWNTOWN EXETER, NH**

RAIN DATE JUNE 5<sup>TH</sup>

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:** 10am-2pm Live music by *The Other Guys* • 10am & 2pm Tour of the Fish Ladder (next to the *Dum View Restaurant*) • 11am & 1pm Critters from the Watershed, a live animal program presented by NH Audubon • Noon Canoe and Kayak Race • 12:30pm Exeter River Steward Award Presentation

**EXETER RIVER**  
LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
*Discovering the Past, Preserving the Future*



For more information please contact us at 603-778-0885  
156 Water Street, Exeter, NH 03833 • [www.exeterriver.org](http://www.exeterriver.org)



SPONSORED BY THE EXETER RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

fr - May 27<sup>th</sup> 05