



# TOWN OF RIVERHEAD NEWS

Office of the Supervisor  
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## **AQUARIUM ARTIST UNVEILS FISH SCULPTURE TO DESIGNATE FISH PASSAGE**

**Riverhead, NY** – To commemorate “World Fish Migration Day” tomorrow, Saturday, March 24,



Long Island Aquarium Exhibit Artist Eli Fishman, right, shows Riverhead Supervisor Sean M. Walter one of the two steel fish sculptures that mark the fish ladder at Grangebél Park.

2014, two steel fish sculptures were unveiled this week at Grangebél Park to designate the newly renovated fish ladder by Long Island Aquarium Exhibit Artist **Eli Fishman**.

In 2010, construction of the rock ramp / fish ladder system replaced a manmade dam that previously prevented fish passage. This fish passage enables River Herring (Alewife) and American Eels in their quest to swim upstream and spawn, thus effectively opening 24 acres of habitat along over 1.5 miles of river. American eel populations have experienced drastic declines in recent years, and habitat expansion rebuilds the species, as well as the animals in the food chain associated with the fish including wide mouthed bass, striped bass, bluefish, weakfish, pickerel, &

yellow perch, as well as birds of prey such as Osprey, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, and Black Crown Night Heron and even mammals like harbor seals, raccoons and river otter. It is estimated that:

- \* 25,000-45,000 Alewives swam upstream in 2010;
- \* 20,000-30,000 Alewives swam upstream in 2011;
- \* 50,000-75,000 Alewives swam upstream in 2012; and
- \* 60,000-85,000 Alewives swam upstream in 2013.

The Town of Riverhead was the centralized administrator for over \$750,000 in grants (state, federal and others) targeted for use to restore historic diadromous fish habitat within the



Peconic River. Several earthen dams along the River prevent fish migration entirely and re-opening the River will combat against the severe coast-wide declines of these species.

“Many partner entities must be recognized for the hard work and funding that was required to complete this project. Specifically, Walter expressed appreciation to the following organizations that contributed to the project: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, American Sportfishing Association, Fish America Foundation, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Association, Peconic Estuary Program, United States Fish & Wildlife Services, New York State Department of State, and Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership.

The Town will celebrate “World Fish Migration Day” with the Peconic Estuary Program and the LI Science Center along with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation at Grangebél Park in Riverhead tomorrow at 11am. Volunteers will help survey parts of the Peconic River for river herring and the LI Science Center will provide indoor activities focusing on the ecology of the Peconic River.

To see a short Lunkerville film about the Peconic River Fish Restoration Commission (PRFRC) community effort it took to build and the unique passion of locals Bob Conklin & Jim Miller go to: [http://rockville.tv/FISH\\_PASSAGE/FISH\\_PASSAGE.html](http://rockville.tv/FISH_PASSAGE/FISH_PASSAGE.html)).

An information sign, as attached, will be installed at a later date in the near future.

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