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Contact: Shelley Dawicki
508-495-2378
shelley.dawicki@noaa.gov

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“Neighbors in Danger 2008: The North Atlantic Right Whale” Focus of Family-Oriented Interactive Event at New Bedford’s Buttonwood Park Zoo September 28

Families and individuals of all ages interested in the environment and animals will have an opportunity to learn about one of Earth’s most critically endangered marine animals, the North Atlantic Right Whale, through a series of interactive events and activities at the Buttonwood Park Zoo in New Bedford on Sunday, September 28, from 1 to 4 p.m.

“Neighbors in Danger 2008: The North Atlantic Right Whale” is a public awareness project of the Zoo’s Roots & Shoots club, a group of area middle and high school students interested in informing the local community about an endangered animal that lives off our coast, right in our own backyard.

More than 13 organizations from the local whale and marine conservation community are sponsoring the event, including the Northeast Fisheries Science Center of NOAA Fisheries, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, New England Aquarium, Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies, and the International Fund for Animal Welfare.

Event visitors will learn how whales use sound and how researchers identify whales, meet marine conservationists, and be able to participate in a series of activities for people of all ages.

Roots & Shoots is a global program of the Jane Goodall Institute for Wildlife Research, Education and Conservation involving tens of thousands of youth in more than 100 countries working on local and community service projects. The program’s mission is to bring about positive change through active learning about, caring for and interacting with the environment. More than 8,000 youth-driven groups around the world develop community service programs and projects to make a difference in the world, from planting trees and coastal cleanups to building trails on public lands to informing local communities about environmental topics like pollution or endangered species.

There are more than 150 Roots & Shoots groups in Massachusetts, many of them affiliated with schools or youth groups. The Buttonwood Park Zoo Roots & Shoots program, called Planet Protectors, was established in February 2008 and is designed to serve New Bedford area youth between the ages of 12 and 16. Misty Niemeyer of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center is one of the group’s advisors.

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Related links:

Buttonwood Park Zoo: <http://www.bpzoo.org/>

Roots & Shoots : <http://www.rootsandshoots.org/>