

Team Leader Bios

Meet the Experts

Dr. Richard (Rick) G. Lathrop Jr. is a professor in the Department of Ecology, Evolution & Natural Resources, School of Environmental & Biological Sciences, Rutgers University and also serves as Director of the Walton Center for Remote Sensing & Spatial Analysis. He has a Ph.D. & M.S. in Environmental Monitoring (1988, 1985) and a M.S. in Forestry (1986) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison; B.A. Biology (1981) from Dartmouth College.

Dr. Elizabeth Lacey is an Assistant Professor of Marine Science at Stockton University. Her research is on coastal ecosystem health and restoration, from oyster reefs to seagrass beds and all the critters that inhabit them. Dr. Lacey teaches classes in marine biology, marine botany and marine conservation at Stockton in addition to field courses in the Florida Keys and on a remote island off the coast of Panama.

Dr. Russell Burke, Professor and Biology Department Chair of Hofstra University, is a community ecologist, who specializes in turtles, lizards, and mammals. Most of the species he studies are either introduced species or rare species, thus population control (either up or down) is important to him. Currently, his major research projects involve diamondback terrapins at Jamaica Bay, wood turtles in northern New Jersey, wall lizards on Long Island, and the interplay between Lyme disease, ticks, and their hosts.

Dr. Kate B. Lepis earned her Ph.D. from Rutgers University in plant biology and currently teaches environmental science at Monmouth University. Her interests include the plant community's native to NJ, combating exotic invasive species, and promoting the use of native plants in landscaping in conjunction with sustainable gardening practices.

Dr. Jean Marie Hartman received her Ph.D. in Ecology from the University of Connecticut, her M.S. in Landscape Architecture, and B.S. in Botany from the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Dr. Hartman's lab group has conducted research on population dynamics and evolution of both rare and invasive plant species, on field methods for evaluating wetlands, and on plant succession in abandoned fields and restoration sites. Her current research focus is on systems functions within watersheds including the relationship between soil erodibility and urban forest composition and structure.

Jeff Dement received a B.S. in Ecology/Professional Natural Resource Management, and a professional Certificate in Environmental Geomatics (GIS) from Cook College, Rutgers University. Dement joined the American Littoral Society in 2008 to manage its 45-year-old citizen science, salt-water fish tagging program, the largest and longest-running program in the U.S. In this role, Jeff manages 1,450 fish recaptures annually, 1,250 volunteer anglers from Maine to Florida. Additionally, Jeff writes articles and field notes for American Littoral Society publications; including "The Underwater Naturalist".

Rebecca Shell M.S. is a research technician and doctoral candidate in Environmental Management at Montclair State University. Her primary focus is on benthic invertebrate biodiversity and community ecology, particularly as impacted by hard-clam aquaculture in Barnegat Bay. Other ongoing projects include benthic invertebrate biodiversity monitoring in the Hackensack River and Meadowlands estuary, the effect of predation on reproduction in freshwater clams, and shell microstructure of the invasive Chinese Mystery Snail (*Bellamya chinensis*).

Lisa Scheppke has worked as a Habitat Restoration Coordinator of the American Littoral Society since March 2012, but was a Society member and volunteer before she joined the staff. The Society introduced her to local wildlife and it wasn't long before she became an avid bird watcher, amateur naturalist, and enthusiastic environmentalist. Although Lisa's main responsibilities include facilitating the removal of large marine debris, organizing shoreline cleanups and conducting marine debris related outreach, she spends most weekends engaged in various naturalistic pursuits.

Denise Gemmellaro is a Ph.D. student of entomology at Rutgers University; the main focus of her research is forensic entomology, with an emphasis on the biodiversity of insects of forensic importance present in data deficient areas. Some of her sites include Sicily (Italy), South Africa and Ecuador. She has done research in the entomofauna present in volcanic caves and has been teaching forensic entomology for a few years in the United States and Italy.

Cecilia Mancini is an ecological risk assessor with AECOM, specializing in contaminated sediment and benthic ecology. She has extensive experience in freshwater and marine benthic taxonomy and ecology of systems throughout the United States. Her marine benthic experience ranges from the Housatonic Estuary in Connecticut to Pamlico Sound, North Carolina, with particular emphasis in the estuarine and marine systems of New York and New Jersey.

Carla F. Garcia earned her B.S. in Environmental Biology from Columbia University and currently works for the Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Resources Division of New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. She is interested in the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of wetlands, particularly those nearest large cities.

Daniel Atha, the New York Botanical Garden's Conservation Program Manager, has conducted botanical field work in all 50 states plus locales including Vietnam, Bolivia, Mexico, and Belize. He is an associate editor the Garden's systematic botany Journal, *Brittonia*. His work to document the wild flora of Central Park was recently featured in *The New York Times*.

Natalie Howe is a student in the graduate program in Ecology and Evolution at Rutgers University, where she studies lichen ecology at the Pinelands Research Station. She has led and co-led lichen teams in 'bioblitz' at the New York Botanical Garden, Freshkills landfill, and the Watchung Reservation.

Carl Alderson is the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Habitat Restoration Coordinator, Marine Resources Specialist and Licensed Landscape Architect for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Restoration Center, located at the Howard National Marine Science Lab in Highlands, NJ. Carl has provided management, restoration planning and technical design guidance to coastal habitat projects valued at over \$50 million dollars and effecting hundreds of miles of shoreline and stream miles.

Linda L. Stehlik has worked as a Fishery Biologist at the NOAA Fisheries, James J. Howard Marine Science Lab at Sandy Hook since 1985. Her work there includes biological research, field and laboratory studies, experiments with fish, crabs, and other invertebrates, scientific writing; particularly diet and behavior studies. She received her B.S. at Douglass College, Rutgers University and M.A. in Marine Science at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science.

The New Jersey Mycological Association is a non-profit organization whose aims are to provide a means for sharing ideas, experiences, knowledge and common interests regarding fungi, and to furnish mycological information and educational materials to those who wish to increase their knowledge about mushrooms.